

The background of the magazine cover features a photograph of a woman in a black and white polka-dot bikini jumping into a shallow, rocky river. She is captured mid-air, with water splashing around her. The river flows through a rocky landscape with green foliage in the foreground and background.

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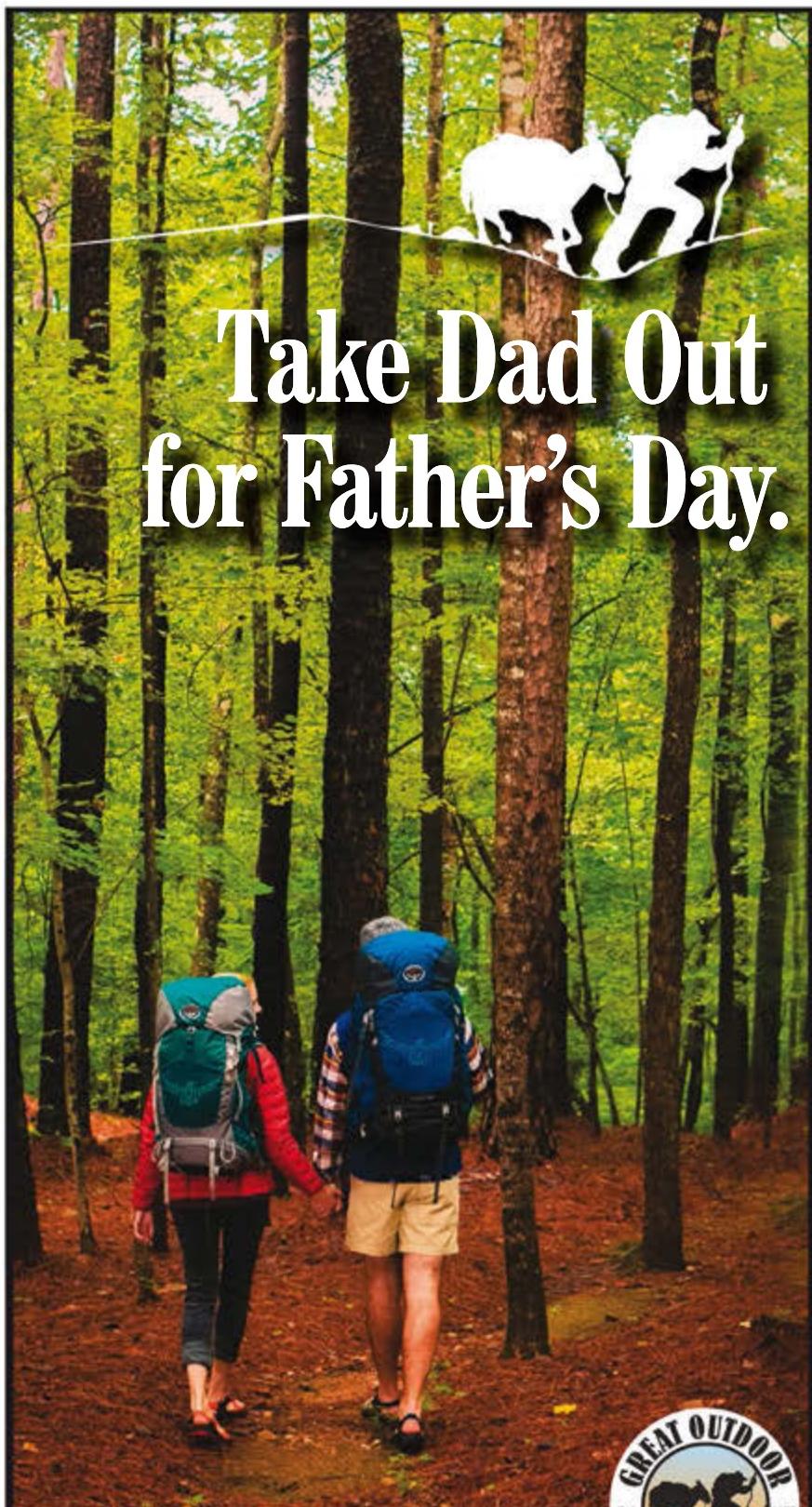
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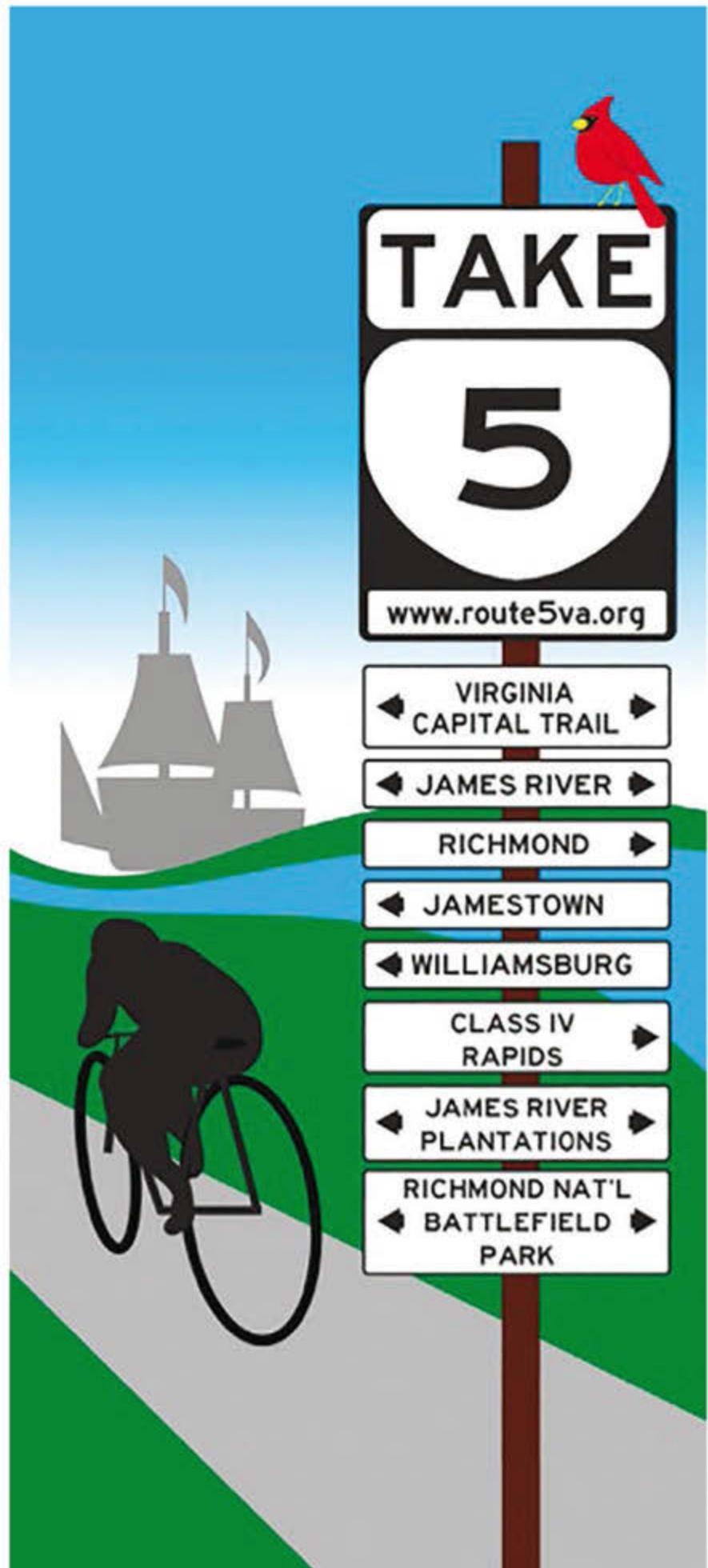


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CHATTER

07.15

ADVENTURE IS COLOR-BLIND

The idea that people should be bothered by a lack of diversity in outdoor sports is both absurd and arrogant. To suggest that thousands of black people in towns like Asheville and Charlottesville need help finding the trailhead, buying gear, or figuring out the outdoors is utterly patronizing. A lung-busting climb and a class-V rapid treat everyone with indiscriminate fairness. Isn't that why we go to the woods: to escape the hucksters and elitists who claim to know what's best for us?

—Phil Morgan, Hendersonville, N.C.

DUELING BANJOS—AND EMOTIONS

Thanks to Ky Delaney for her courageous, candid inner journey down the Chattooga River. To confront her own subconscious stereotypes—and then watch them shattered by the kindness of strangers—was incredibly gutsy.

—Jill Youse, Atlanta, Ga.

WON'T PIPE DOWN

Southern Appalachia is celebrated for its pristine water. Why, then, are we willing to poison it with fracking and pipelines? Not just one but four fracking pipelines have been proposed for the Southeast, bisecting prized trout streams, beloved rivers, and drinking water for millions. And most of this fracked, piped gas will be shipped overseas.

—Karen Blumenthal, Richmond, Va.



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WORST ROAD TRIP MOMENT EVER?



WILL HARLAN

Being held at gunpoint by narco militias in Mexico's Copper Canyons. Totally ruined the vibe.



JENNIFER PHARR DAVIS

The excitement and spray of projectile vomiting from a backseat toddler in five-minute interludes.



JOHN BRYANT BAKER

While driving cross-country, I noticed a tire pass me on the right. Looking in the rearview mirror, I saw a shower of sparks spraying out from my camper.



NICK NOE

Since I hardly ever carry cash, anytime a toll road pops up, my journey instantly falls into the Worst Road Trip Ever Category. If you've never written a check for 45 cents, you ought to try it some time.



CHRIS GRAGTMANS

On a desolate stretch of highway, one of my rooftop kayaks spiraled into the night like a boomerang. I slammed on the brakes and slid into the median, then ran down the middle of the highway towards my kayak, staring down the headlights of a semi truck barreling towards me. I yanked my kayak out of the way, just as the truck flew past blaring its horn.



TRAVIS HALL

On a cross-country journey from Yellowstone, I stopped to refuel in Somewhere, Illinois and mistakenly assumed that all gas pumps had been outfitted with auto-stopping mechanisms. When I returned from my routine beef jerky run, I discovered a \$50 puddle of 87 octane outlining my '97 Mitsubishi Galant.



JESS DADDIO

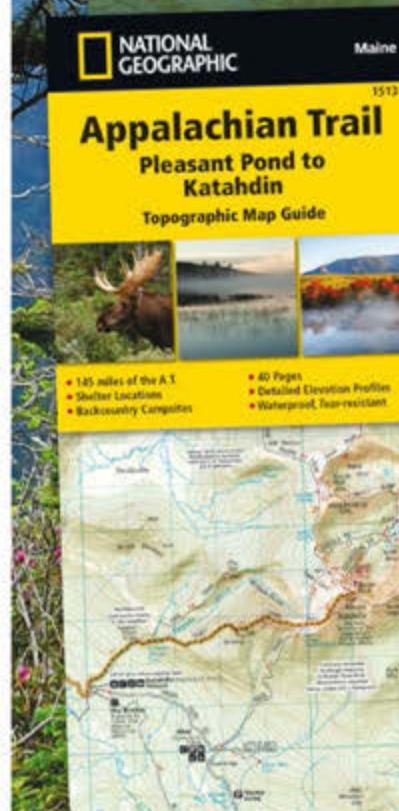
Leaving my wallet on top of the car, driving away into the night on a near-empty tank, returning the next day to the same stretch of highway to search for the wallet, only to run out of gas and be left totally stranded without fuel or the money to buy it.

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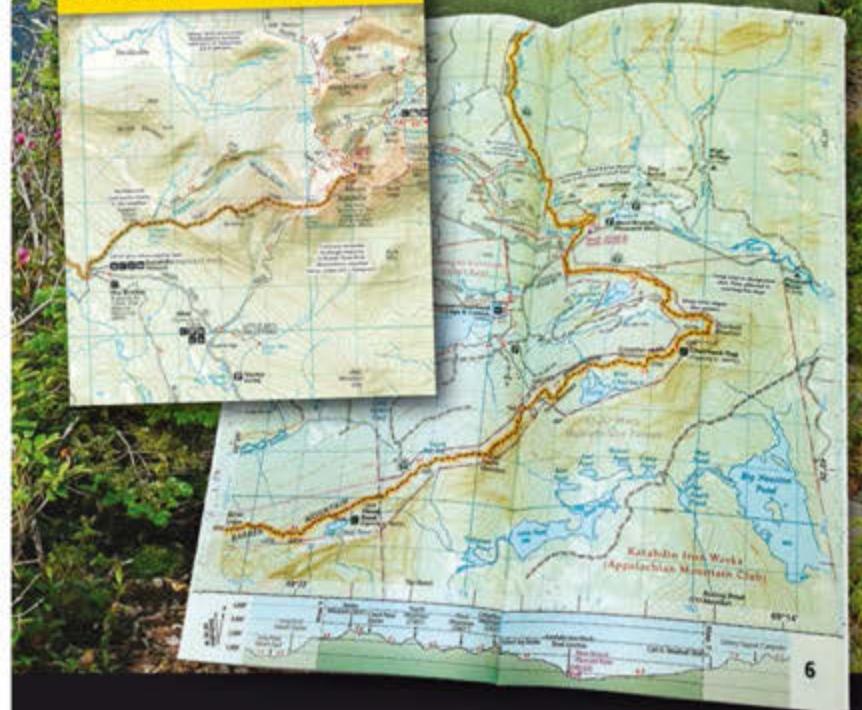
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RIVER RIGHT

A WATERSHED GOES TO COURT

LATE LAST YEAR, for the first time in U.S. history, a watershed filed a motion to intervene in a lawsuit to defend its right to exist. Not a riverkeeper, nor a river advocacy organization—an actual watershed: the Little Mahoning in Pennsylvania.

The Little Mahoning's "rights to exist and flourish" was enacted into law by Pennsylvania's Grant Township to protect the watershed and the community from fracking. It's being challenged in court by Pennsylvania General Energy Company, who wants to frack in the Little Mahoning watershed.

Does a river have rights? Over 200 communities across the country—including the city of Pittsburgh—think so. They have passed laws that recognize rights of rivers, forests, and ecosystems to exist.

Most often, these rights of nature are enacted to protect a community from an environmental threat: factory farms, water privatization, sewage sludging of farmland, and especially lately, fracking. Pittsburgh's ordinance explicitly elevates the rights of nature over corporate rights and bans fracking within its watersheds.

The rights of nature movement is spreading beyond our borders. Ecuador ratified the world's first constitutional rights of nature in 2008. India is considering enacting rights for the sacred Ganges River.

In the past century, we have widened our circle of inclusion to encompass women's rights, civil rights, gay rights, and even the rights of endangered species. Can we expand the circle to include all of nature? Or is that overreaching?

Corporations claim that neither a town nor a river can overrule state or federal laws, which give them the right to frack, mine, inject, pipe, dam, and drill across most of the country.



And who decides what a river wants anyway? Who actually speaks for the trees, and do we want them all to have a voice?

This is about recognizing the rights of ecosystems to exist and thrive so that human actions do not threaten the long-term survival of the system upon which we depend, says Mari Margil, associate director of the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund, which has spearheaded the rights of nature movement. "A river has the right to flow. Fish and other species in a river have the right to exist and evolve. And the plants and animals that depend on a river have the right to thrive."

Margil says that existing

environmental laws and regulatory agencies are failing colossally to safeguard our health. The broken system mostly perpetuates the rights of corporations to frack, mine, and drill. By legally enshrining basic rights of nature, communities are revolutionizing the fight to protect the environment and themselves.

"When state and federal laws prevent towns from protecting themselves, communities are deciding to make their own laws and take a stand for the health of their human and natural communities," says Margil.

The Little Mahoning is a small creek, but it's already making a big splash. If the courts uphold its right to exist, it will ironically give

THE LITTLE MAHONING CREEK WATERSHED IN PENNSYLVANIA IS DEFENDING ITS RIGHT TO EXIST (WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM THE COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL LEGAL DEFENSE FUND).

people more power. Our health has always depended on the health of our ecosystems. We're not going to be able to protect one without the other. *

WILL HARLAN
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DIVE DEEPER into the rights of nature debate on page 10 and online at BlueRidgeOutdoors.com

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DOES NATURE HAVE RIGHTS?

MOTHER NATURE V. HER POLLUTERS

by JEFF KINNEY

Despite incremental improvements, stemming the tide of development (sorry, “progress”) can seem like an exercise in futility. But what if we gave nature itself—trees, rivers, entire ecosystems—a right, codified in our legal systems, to exist and flourish? Robin Milam, of the Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature, and Holly Doremus, a law professor at the University of California at Berkeley, square off.

WHAT RIGHTS DOES NATURE HAVE?

RM: Natural systems have the right to exist, persist, maintain, and regenerate. Not only do humans need for ecosystems to be healthy, but the ecosystems themselves need to be healthy and continue their natural cycles. We need to recognize that fact in our legal, social, and economic systems.

HD: The key difficulty, though, is deciding who speaks for a natural object and how they know what the wishes of the natural object are. How do we know whether a mountain prefers a ski run or a forest?

HOW CAN RIGHTS OF NATURE CHANGE THE WAY WE PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT?

RM: When rights of nature are adopted by a country, state, or community, an ecosystem under threat is given legal standing and representation, which can make all the difference in a case. Also, damages are assigned to repairing the ecosystem instead of going to the individual who owns the property. More fundamentally, it’s the recognition that nature isn’t just property to be bought, sold, and

consumed. That natural systems in and of themselves have an intrinsic right to be healthy. Our legal system is currently set up to protect nature through regulations and permits, and that process is failing. Once a permit is deemed legal, there’s very little that a community can do to stop the process, whether it’s fracking or factory farming or mountaintop removal. That’s why some of them have passed rights-based laws.

HD: I don’t think it would help environmentalists win more cases in federal court. Standing difficulties involve proving future harm, generalized harms—things like global warming—and probabilistic harms where we’re pretty sure bad things are going to happen somewhere, but we’re not sure where. I don’t see intrinsic rights of nature getting us over any of those humps.

HOW DO WE BALANCE, SAY, A TREE’S RIGHT NOT TO BE CUT DOWN WITH A HUMAN’S RIGHT TO A HOUSE?

RM: It’s not about an individual tree—it’s about entire ecosystems. We’re going to continue to cut down trees and use other natural resources, but the rights of nature should inform how we strike the balance. The ecosystem that’s part of a dispute is given legal standing when the laws of nature are part of the legal framework.

HD: I see defining rights of nature as highly problematic. What are the boundaries? Plus, if you just adopt rules that confer legal rights, I don’t see that getting us anywhere. You have to change people’s attitudes as well.



WHO SPEAKS FOR THE TREES? ROBIN MILAM (LEFT) AND HOLLY DOREMUS (RIGHT) HOLD DIFFERING VIEWS ON THE RIGHTS OF NATURE.

EVEN SOME ENVIRONMENTALISTS ARGUE THAT WE SHOULD BE FOCUSING INSTEAD ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO CLEAN WATER AND BREATHABLE AIR.

RM: That’s the approach we’ve already taken, and while certainly conditions have improved in specific areas, business as usual isn’t really working. We need to get out of the box and rethink how we relate to our planet and reclaim natural processes. The Rights of Nature movement is a continuation of the civil rights movement. We begin with our individual voices standing together to bring about the necessary systemic

social, economic, political and legal changes for us to live in harmony with all life.

HD: People who don’t believe in the rights of nature might resist this kind of thing in a way that they wouldn’t resist another legal framework. For example, you don’t have to believe that creatures have an intrinsic right to exist to endorse the Endangered Species Act. And if we’re trying to get public funding to pay people to represent nature, politically I think that would be a tough sell. *



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BLUE RIDGE BRIEFS

by JEDD FERRIS

BLUE RIDGE IS TOP NATIONAL PRIORITY FOR CONSERVATION

A recent study by the National Academy of Sciences identified the nine most important areas of conservation based on their proportional concentration of endemic species. The Blue Ridge Mountains, which include the Cherokee, Nantahala, Pisgah, and Jefferson National Forests, topped the list, while the three-state-meeting area of Tennessee, Alabama, and north Georgia watersheds came in at number 4.

"Most funding goes to preserve iconic landscapes out West, but there is far more biodiversity and richness in ecosystems here," said Brent Martin, Southern Appalachian director of The Wilderness Society.

COLLEGIATE MOUNTAIN BIKER SUSPENDED FOR DOPING / BANNER ELK, N.C.

A cyclist for Lees-McRae College in the North Carolina High Country received a 12-month suspension from the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency in May. Mountain biker Carter Luck voluntarily disclosed information that led to him being sanctioned for use of human growth hormone and testosterone. Luck raced throughout the Southeastern Collegiate Cycling Conference's full season last fall and won a championship in the dual slalom event. He also placed 31st at cross-country nationals. All of his competitive results since August 5, 2013 have been disqualified. In a

statement issued by Lees-McRae, Luck said: "I am ashamed of my actions and will forever regret my poor choice. It is important to note that Lees-McRae College had absolutely no knowledge of my doping."

THE BIONIC WOMAN ON THE A.T.

Niki Rellon has always been an adventurer—a triathlete, ski instructor, and former Pacific Crest Trail thru-hiker. But in 2013 she was severely injured after a rappelling accident. She broke her spine and pelvis and so badly damaged her entire left foot that it required amputation.

Rellon has been determined not to allow the loss of her leg to slow her down. Diligent with rehab, she's now attempting an Appalachian Trail thru-hike, currently heading north with the trail name "The

Bionic Woman." Rellon admits that she's frequently in pain and frustrated that some days she only covers around seven miles, but she's optimistic she'll reach Katahdin by October.

EMU ON THE INTERSTATE / ATLANTA, GA.

Metro Atlanta traffic can be a real bummer. This spring some drivers on I-20 west of the city were in a typical jam but surprised when they saw the cause—a big bird running across the highway lanes. While initially mistaken for an ostrich, it was actually an emu that ended up causing the traffic jam. The Australian native bird escaped the home of a private owner and wandered to the interstate. It eventually returned home unharmed. *

illustration by WADE MICKLEY

BEYOND THE BLUE RIDGE

BASE JUMPER DIES AFTER LIGHTING PARACHUTE / TWIN FALLS, IDAHO

A couple of tragic BASE jumping accidents made headlines in May. The outdoor community was rocked by the death of adventure legend Dean Potter in Yosemite National Park, but a stranger event took place in Idaho. On May 7, 73-year-old James E. Hickey and a partner jumped off the Perrine Bridge in Twin Falls. As Hickey started to fall 500 feet towards the Snake River below, video footage shows him becoming engulfed in flames before plunging into the water. Hickey set his parachute on fire as part of a stunt with the intention of dropping it and deploying a second chute. Apparently Hickey had previously completed the stunt while skydiving, but unfortunately this attempt had a different outcome.

RUNNING DOC SAVES SECOND LIFE DURING RACE / PHILADELPHIA, PA.

Dr. Paul Shore was at the right place at the right time, again. On May 3, Shore was running the 10-mile Broad Street Run in Philadelphia when the pediatrician noticed a group of runners yelling for help and trying to assist another racer who had collapsed around mile three. A man stopped breathing and started to turn blue, so Shore, with the help of another bystander, administered CPR. Fortunately, the man started breathing again and was then taken into the care of arriving EMTs.

This wasn't the first time Shore had helped a fallen runner. He also assisted someone who collapsed on the course of the Philadelphia Marathon in 2013.

Shore went on to finish the Broad Street Run in 1:44:42, about 20 minutes slower than the previous year, but his noble effort was obviously worth the extra time on the course.





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THE BARN THAT LOVE BUILT

A GAY MARRIED COUPLE IN W.VA.
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by WILEY CASH

"People have a lot of misconceptions about Appalachia and West Virginia in particular," says Harry Sanford. He and Chatman Neely are co-owners of the 35-acre Highland Springs Farm—and the Barn With Inn Bed and Breakfast—in Wellsburg, W.Va. "When people visit us from Pittsburgh or California or Austin, they are surprised to find that the region is more of a destination than they assumed. They're surprised to find that organic, farm-to-table food can be sophisticated and worldly."

They may also be surprised that two gay, married men are operating a bed and breakfast in what many perceive as one of the most conservative states in the country. Sanford and Neely were legally married in Maryland in 2013, and after two decades as a couple, they finally felt comfortable owning and operating a business together.

"There are close to 2,000 legal privileges that married couples have that unmarried people don't," Neely says, "and a lot of those pertain to property ownership and other legal protections."

"The validation of being legally married has allowed us to operate as a couple instead of as business partners," Sanford adds. "When we go to business meetings we go as a married couple running a business together instead of two guys partnering on a business."

"It also makes me feel like I'm much more a part of my culture and my country than I ever thought I would be," Neely says. "We'd been in a relationship for twenty years before we got married, but now we own a piece of the American Dream, and no



one can take it away from us."

Part of that dream has become a reality with this spring's grand opening of Barn With Inn, a bed and breakfast on the farm that combines rural farm life with world-class hospitality.

Neely, a social worker, has long served the region by caring for its people, while Sanford, a veterinarian, has done the same by caring for its animals. The skills acquired and refined over those years of service are now serving the two men well as the owners and operators of Barn With Inn.

"As a social worker, I'm compelled to show people it's okay to let others take care of them," Neely, the inn's executive chef, says. The three of us have gathered in the sitting area of one of the guest rooms: a renovated hayloft where two skylights and a large picture window allow the mid-morning April sun to illuminate the room's Victorian furniture and antique furnishings.

"And I'm a scientist," Sanford, the inn's farm manager, says, "so I'm drawn to details and organization, and I want to plan and organize and

carry out things in great detail so our guests can relax."

This balance of care and detail permeates everything about Barn With Inn. While it was once used to store hay during long winters, a local carpenter's renovation now allows modern luxury to meld effortlessly with recycled materials: radiant-heated floors in the private bathroom, stained-glass wall sconces, cherry hardwoods, pine ceilings and poplar trim, a queen-size headboard customized from 150-year-old hand-hewn cabin posts. But the life of the farm is never far away; to complete the rustic feel two windows allow guests to peer down into the barn where donkeys, sheep, chickens, pigs, and other animals go about their day as if no one were watching.

"There's a whisper here that reminds us to listen to our interior voices," Neely adds. "That's what our animals do: they eat when they're hungry, they drink when they're thirsty, they nap when they're tired. They have very simple but purposeful routines. That's the experience we want our guests to have."

The cuisine at Barn With Inn

HARRY SANFORD (LEFT) AND CHATMAN NEELY (RIGHT) OPENED BARN WITH INN ON THEIR 35-ACRE FARM IN WEST VIRGINIA.

photo by PRESTIGE PHOTOGRAPHY

centers around what's ripe in the garden, what's fresh at the local, organic markets, and who's venturing out to the farm to cook a meal in Neely's kitchen. This morning's breakfast was a vegetable frittata courtesy of the farm's free-range chickens and the garden's fresh asparagus, and last night's dinner was a four-course Italian feast prepared by two local women who recently relocated from Rome.

For people who aren't familiar with what the northern panhandle of West Virginia has to offer, the cuisine and accommodations available at Barn With Inn may be unexpected.

"We have an opportunity as ambassadors of the region to remind the public that there are incredible people and opportunities in West Virginia," Neely says. "There are other farms like ours. There are world-class wine shops and markets and art galleries and musicians."

Wolf WARS

**THE LAST 100
RED WOLVES ARE
PROTECTED BY A
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NORTH CAROLINA
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HUNTERS AND THE N.C.
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SHUT IT DOWN.**

by BEN PRATER

lost to our mountains but is beginning to recover and reclaim its native land.

But I can't ignore the silence of animals that can no longer be heard in the Smokies. Only a few decades ago, one could still hear the howls and cries of the red wolf. Though the red wolf has been silenced in the Smokies, it can still be heard in the wilds of eastern North Carolina. This swampy stronghold is the only place in the world where endangered red wolves roam free.

The red wolf was nearly driven to extinction in the 1950s through aggressive predator control programs. The red wolf population was decimated so badly that it was declared extinct in the wild in 1980.

As a last-ditch effort, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service rounded up all of the remaining red wolves to rebuild an "experimental population."

In 1987, a breeding population of red wolves was released at Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge on an isolated coastal peninsula of eastern North Carolina. The wolves that were released included only four mating pairs. From this first generation, the population now includes over 100 animals.

As the population has grown, the recovery program has faced increasing scrutiny and attacks from some unlikely foes. The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission recently passed a series of resolutions that aim to undermine the protections

for the red wolf and destroy the species outright. They say that it's too challenging, too expensive, too contentious, and too late to protect the red wolf. I say, welcome to conservation.

TOO CHALLENGING?

Conservation is inherently challenging, but since when has that stopped us? What if we had given up on the grizzly, the gray wolf, or the bald eagle? Can you imagine having our national symbol relegated to a mere picture on the back of a quarter? The NC Wildlife Resources Commission is only interested in a future without the red wolf. In my view the real challenge is revamping the apple-polishing good ol' boy

I mourn the loss of things that my children and I will never see—whether it's the mass migration of passenger pigeons or the white blossoms of the American chestnut covering the mountains. Among these wounds there is indeed hope—a hope that can be seen, heard, and felt. For example, one can travel to Cataloochee Valley in the Great Smoky Mountains to hear the majestic, ear-piercing shrill of an elk bugle. This species was once

politics that pervade these agencies entrusted to serve the public.

TOO EXPENSIVE?

In 2007, the last year the data was compiled, a total of \$1.4 million in federal money was spent on red wolf conservation efforts. This is less than 1% of what was spent on all endangered mammals combined. Compare that to the bald eagle, a recovered and delisted species, which cost \$9.5 million.

And just guess how much the state of North Carolina spent on red wolf recovery in 2007? A paltry and embarrassing \$1,523. That's roughly \$15 per wild red wolf for the entire year. I would guess the NC Wildlife Resources Commission spends more than \$1,500 a year on coffee and donuts for their meetings.

TOO CONTENTIOUS?

When European settlers first began their war against the wild in the U.S., the only good predator was a dead one. We believed that with less predators came more game. We soon learned that ecology isn't quite that simple as disease spread, ranges transformed to dust, and forests were denuded of new growth.

Predator eradication policies of the past have damaged ecosystems and swung nature's balance in radical directions. Nowhere have these lessons been more evident than in the East. We nearly lost all of our predators and even our prized game species. Today we celebrate the return of the white-tail deer, the wild turkey, and now the elk. But we are just now recognizing the incredible value of predators like the wolf and the cougar to these game populations and to entire ecosystems. For many agencies, though, outdated attitudes toward predators still persist.

TOO LATE?

"We are doomed." "Things have gotten so bad we are just going to have to live with it." "Species go extinct all the time with no



real consequences." I have heard all of these statements from professional conservationists. It's understandable to sometimes feel this way. Aldo Leopold, one of the founding fathers of conservation, wrote, "One of the penalties of an ecological education is that one lives alone in a world of wounds."

Too often, though, we let these wounds fester rather than mend. Many of today's conservation interests embrace pessimism, focusing on the magnitude of the challenge rather than the importance of the solution.

It's not too late for the 100 red wolves in east North Carolina. Do you think the red wolf wishes to pace the confines of a pen alone as the last member of its species? Is this the future we want for the world's most endangered wolf? The red wolf will fight for its existence, and so must we. It's never too late to try. We must not lose hope, because this is one wound we can heal. *

 **LEARN MORE** about the red wolf and how you can protect this critically important species at WildSouth.org

WHY IS THE NC WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION (NCWRC) PROPOSING TO END THE RED WOLF RECOVERY PROGRAM, AND WHAT CAN BE DONE?

As of January 2015, the NCWRC passed two resolutions that requested the US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) end the Red Wolf Recovery Program and capture and remove all red wolves from private lands. This resolution threatens the very existence of the species. Over 27 years of recovery would be halted, and the species would once again go extinct in the wild. The reasons cited by the NCWRC are that the Recovery Program has been a failure, the wolves are hybridizing with coyotes, and sea level rise will force the wolves onto private lands. The latter is ironic since the state of North Carolina does not recognize the reality of climate change and passed a law banning any discussion on sea level rise until 2016.

Public comments are crucial. Howl for the wolves: let the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service know that the red wolves deserve protection and the Recovery Program needs to be continued. Email comments to Cynthia Dohner, Southeast Regional Director of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, at cynthia_dohner@fws.gov and Dan Ashe, Director of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, at dan_ashe@fws.gov.

IS THERE ANY CHANCE OF EVER BRINGING THE RED WOLF BACK TO THE SMOKIES AND/OR SOUTHERN APPALACHIANS?

Alligator River represents the only location where red wolves have been successfully reintroduced to the wild. Other reintroduction programs have been initiated but failed. Red wolves were released into Great Smoky Mountains National Park in the early 1990s but were recaptured after the wolves left the park boundaries in search of prey. Fearing conflicts with nearby cattle farmers, the program was ended in 1998.

For the red wolf to return to Southern Appalachians, human attitudes must shift. With sea level rise threatening the coastal population, the best hope for red wolves is to be returned to the vast stretches of public lands in western North Carolina.

ARE WOLVES AND COYOTES INTERBREEDING? ARE THESE COY-WOLVES A GOOD OR BAD THING?

While wolves and coyotes share much of their genes, they are classified as separate species and are managed as such. For most of their history coyotes and red wolves did not interbreed as most coyotes inhabited the western states and their migrations were suppressed by healthy wolf populations. As wolves were exterminated from their native range, the range of the coyote expanded. With wolves becoming more isolated, healthy wolf pack dynamics broke down, and wolves in search of mates began to interbreed with coyotes. This interbreeding has caused genetic introgression of coyotes into the red wolf populations and has produced coyote/wolf hybrids sometimes referred to as coy-wolves. Only a healthy population of red wolves that is allowed to expand can overcome the biological invasion of coyotes.



2015 WINNER LUNA

We received over 365 photos (and nearly 15,400 votes) for our third annual contest! Our winner this year is a bit of tear jerker.

After a courageous battle with cancer, Luna has crossed over the rainbow bridge—but not before capturing the hearts of *BRO* readers everywhere. “Luna was my housemate, bodyguard, companion, running partner, playmate, confidant, and so, so much more,” said owner Cheyenne Swing. “I was one-hundred percent devastated with Luna’s cancer diagnosis in February.” But Cheyenne didn’t let the grief of the diagnosis overwhelm her. Instead she organized a bucket list of Blue Ridge destinations for Luna, allowing her to live out her final days in the most adventurous way possible. “The cancer may have been stronger, but Luna still won the fight,” she said. “She completed her bucket list and was constantly showered in love.”

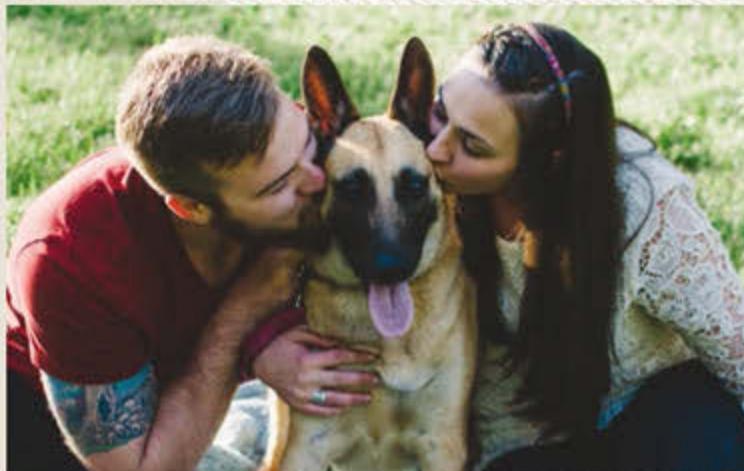
Luna’s humans have decided to honor our second place winner with the Dublin Dog prize package. Rest in peace, Luna.

2015 PHOTO CONTEST

BLUE RIDGE
outdoors
go outside and play.



DUBLINDOG.COM



SECOND PLACE COPPER & HARVEY



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CHEYENNE SWING

PHOTO COURTESY LEIGH BASHAM

GRAND PRIZE PACKAGE!



BROOK TROUT KOA COLLAR



GRIPPLE



TRUCKER HAT



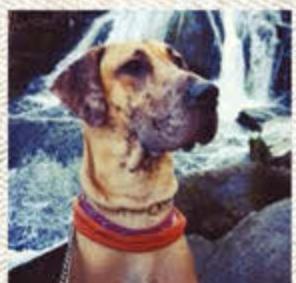
QUICK DRY TOWEL



NOMAD BOWL



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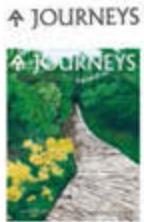


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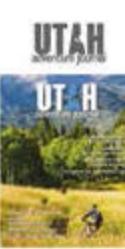
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Outdoor Adventure Media is a national network of regional outdoor sports, adventure lifestyle magazines. Each OAM publication is the definitive guide to outdoor recreation, travel and gear in its region.

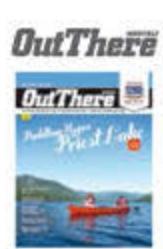
EAST COST



ROCKY MTNS



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TO ADVERTISE PLEASE CONTACT Martha Evans | 828-225-0868 x 2 | 828-231-6858 martha@outdooradventuremedia.com
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TURN IT OFF



HOW SOCIAL MEDIA IS CHANGING THE WAY WE PLAY, OR IS IT?

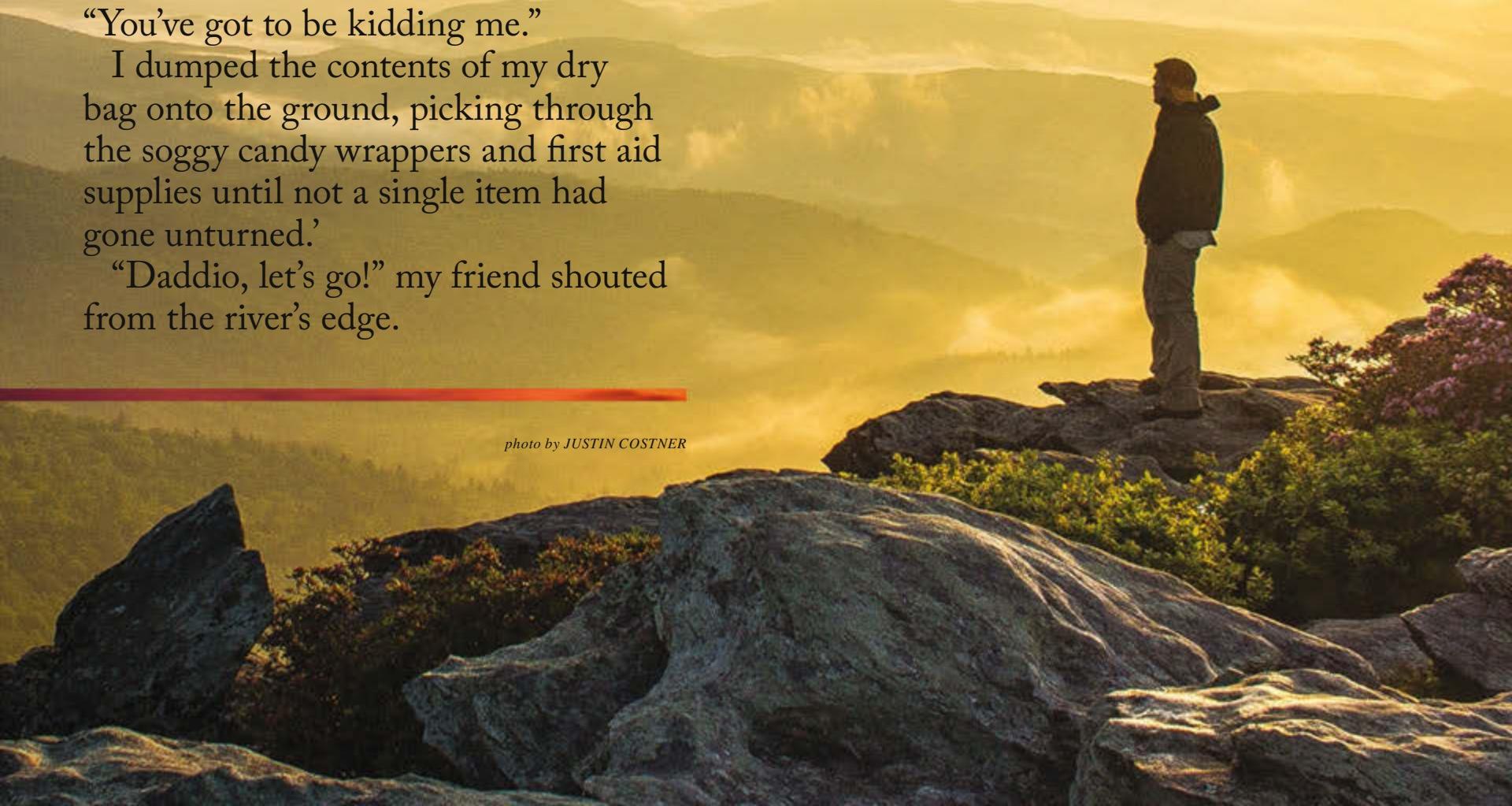
by JESS DADDIO

“You’ve got to be kidding me.”

I dumped the contents of my dry bag onto the ground, picking through the soggy candy wrappers and first aid supplies until not a single item had gone unturned.

“Daddio, let’s go!” my friend shouted from the river’s edge.

photo by JUSTIN COSTNER



It was six o'clock. Daylight was fading fast. Our group of three had decided not two hours earlier that we would try to squeeze in a lap down the Big Sandy, a class IV-V run at the heart of the Cheat River watershed. I'd waited an entire year to run this classic stretch of West Virginia whitewater, arranging my travels so I could be in the area when spring flows peaked. Though we'd be pressed for time, I was excited to get my personal first descent (PFD) and document the adventure with my trusty sidekick, a GoPro Hero 3+.

The only problem? I'd forgotten the GoPro mount.

"Dude, what took you so long?" my friend asked as I finally situated myself in the cockpit of my kayak and slid into the water.

"I was looking for my GoPro mount," I said.

"Well, where is it?"

"I forgot it."

My friend's eyes widened. He rammed my boat with the bow of his.

"What do you mean you forgot it," he asked? "How are we gonna get shots of you coming off Wonder Falls?"

"That's not what it's about," I said, hardly convincing myself. "Let's just paddle."

We set off downstream, and for the first half hour, I barely took notice of the immense rock walls rising from the river and the golden sunlight peeking over the treetops—I was too busy kicking myself for forgetting that stupid piece of plastic.

In my mind, I could see the picture that I'd never have: the spray of Wonder Falls against an early evening haze, my green boat soaring off the lip of that glorious 20-footer, blade planted firmly, face part-bewildered, part-determined. No. There would be none of that. There would be no evening GoPro viewing over a round of beers, no posting a photo of my first waterfall run to Instagram, no proof that I'd even paddled the Big Sandy at all save for a bloody knuckle and my friend's word.

So would anyone believe that it

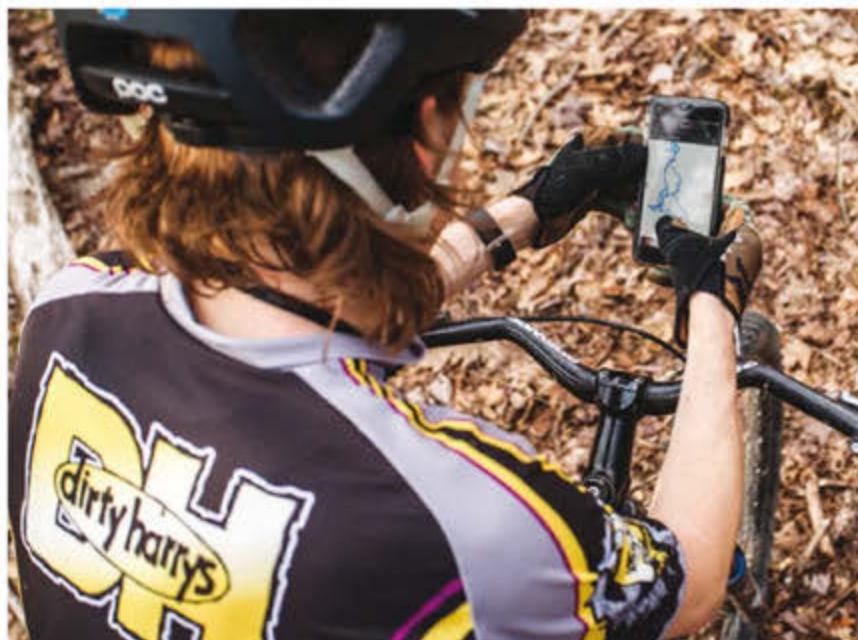
had happened at all?

This isn't the first time I've struggled with being in the moment and wanting to document it, too. I once hiked for two hours in the dark to shoot a sunrise, only to realize at the summit that I'd left my camera battery plugged into the wall back

memory as clear as if I had seen it yesterday. Still, it got me thinking: why was I up there anyway? Was it really for the sunrise?

There's no denying that the reach of social media has extended far beyond our

There would be no evening GoPro viewing over a round of beers, no posting a photo of my first waterfall run to Instagram, no proof that I'd even paddled the Big Sandy at all save for a bloody knuckle and my friend's word. So would anyone believe that it had happened at all?



home. And while, eventually, I was able to get past my irritation and enjoy the picturesque morning in technology-free, unadulterated bliss, I couldn't help but let one dangerous thought sneak into my consciousness—I got up at 3 a.m. to hike for nothing.

Of course, it wasn't for nothing. While there would be no mountaintop selfie to share with my friends on Facebook, the scene of the rising sun illuminating the valley floor remains imprinted in my

screens. Adventure photographers like Corey Rich and Renan Ozturk post to Instagram amid the world's most extreme settings. From the Dawn Wall of El Capitan to the high altitude peaks of Myanmar in Southeast Asia, armchair travelers can revel in the exotic and the epic without ever leaving their desktop. These days, social media is inescapable, seemingly as essential to adventure as the adventure itself. But is that necessarily a bad thing? While it could be argued that social

media platforms have taken away the mysteries of the world and exploited our natural playgrounds, particularly designated wilderness areas, is it possible to make the case that social media has actually played an important role in getting more people outside?

"It's a double-edged sword for sure," says Mark Eller, communications director for the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) and mastermind behind the online forum MTB Project.

Eller has spent the better part of his life on a set of wheels. Just a few years ago, however, his obsession with riding took a different turn when he downloaded a new social media app designed with the competitive rider (and runner) in mind: Strava.

Touted as an all-encompassing fitness app that logs everything from calories burned to GPS coordinates, Strava certainly isn't the only app of its kind. But its ability to break down rides into segments and put users' times against each other on a digital leaderboard has spurred a new generation of athletes to go hard in pursuit of their rightful place atop the cyber podium as King of the Mountain (or KOM).

"We call them 'Stravaletes,'" says New River Bikes owner Andrew Forron. "That or 'Strava-assholes.'"

If you couldn't tell, Forron's not the biggest fan of Strava. In fact, should you find yourself on a group ride in the New River Gorge with Forron at the helm, don't be surprised if he asks you to turn it off. If you don't, consider this: he's not afraid to do it for you.

"I think it's terrible," Forron says about Strava. "I think it's changed how people interact together when they go places. It used to be when you went somewhere, you went to the bike shop, met the folks there, and tried to get in on their after-work ride."

Now, Forron says, cyclists don't need the bike shop community to find the cool local loops in town—all they need is a little cell coverage and a

Strava account.

"It creates a false sense of community," Forron adds, "and it's caused more people to ride alone."

Though there's undoubtedly some truth in Forron's claim, for riders like Eller, Strava affords ambitious individuals an outlet for that need for speed.

"It allows you to have a competitive riding experience wherever you are, whether you're with someone else or not," Eller says of the fitness app. "I'm a dad with a three-year-old and a six-year-old, and for a number of years, I haven't been able to go out to races. Strava opened the door to get that competitive vibe back in my riding."

Mike Cordaro of Mount Pleasant, Penn., couldn't agree more. Look up any route on Strava in the southwestern corner of Pennsylvania and Cordaro's name is likely somewhere near the top five. In total, Cordaro's racked up over 50 KOMs on his home turf in preparation for this year's National Ultra Endurance

(NUE) series, and says the app has helped him keep track of his weekly averages (three rides, 80 miles, seven and a half hours in the saddle).

"I'm not chasing KOMs every time I go," Cordaro says, "but it motivates me. I see other people ride [on Strava] and feel like I need to get after it."

And while Cordaro and Eller and, heck, even Forron, can agree that anything which motivates you to get on your bike is ultimately good, Strava has recently come under legal attack for influencing cyclists in particular to ride faster on trails that have no business being the stage for an unofficial time trial.

"Public trails don't necessarily make great race courses," Eller says. "You have to be discerning about when and where it's appropriate to gear your brains out."

"Strava's not a reason to forgo trail etiquette," Cordaro adds. "Ultimately, if [competitive cycling] is your goal, the best way to do that is racing."

Still, even Eller admits to

allowing his competitive instincts to get the best of him, riding for weeks at a time without ever turning Strava off. But in a blog he posted on IMBA's site titled "Confessions of a Strava Addict," Eller brings up a good point, stating, "...it's not like my nerdy geek posse wasn't comparing times before Strava." Whether by Garmin or by pencil and paper, mountain bikers have been keeping track of ride data for as long as mountain biking has existed.

The only difference now? You can't fudge the facts, something Maryland-based kayaker Ian Wingert knows all too well.

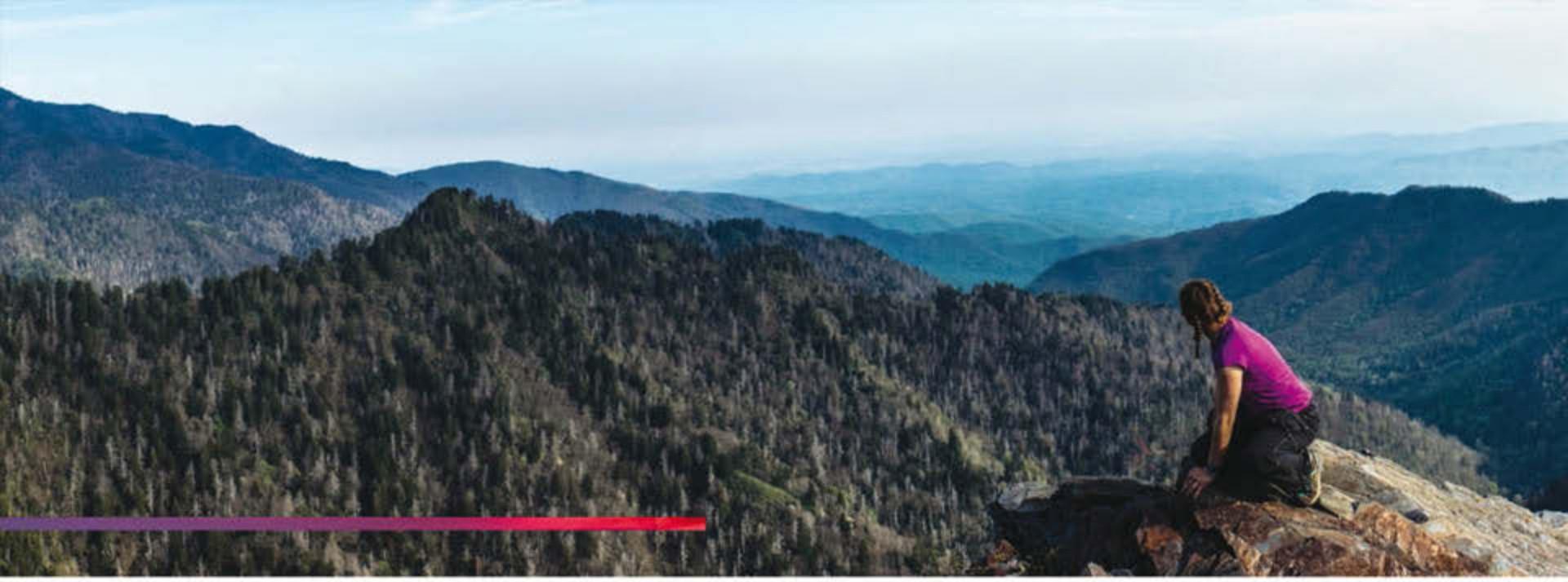
Back in early March, Wingert and two of his fellow paddlers, Todd Baker and Wyatt Hyndman, successfully navigated the first descent of Cucumber Falls outside of Ohiopyle, Penn. At almost 40 feet in height, Cucumber Falls isn't the tallest waterfall to be run in the Laurel Highlands, but it's likely the driest.

"We knew it was going to run one to two days a year," Wingert says. "We can't really afford trips to Mexico or the Northwest, so when this came along, we knew we had to do it."

The crew had been scouting the line at Cucumber Falls for nearly three years but the water level was never high enough for an attempt. After a few days of heavy rain and snowmelt in late February 2015, however, the opportunity finally presented itself—it was now or never.

With a friend setting safety at the bottom, all three paddlers styled clean lines over the drop. But it was in the pool below the falls that two of the three, Wingert included, got into trouble. A fallen log blocked the current's main flow on river right, creating what's referred to as a "strainer." Though Wingert and Hyndman hit the log head-on, they flushed through and escaped unscathed. Baker altogether avoided the strainer and safely eddied out above, but as the three would soon





find out, that log would prove to be the least of their problems.

"The video made it look like we disregarded the fact that there was wood at the bottom and like we were disregarding safety," Wingert says of the two-minute edit Baker compiled from their first descent footage.

The video, which Wingert and Baker's employer Immersion Research (one of the whitewater industry's leading gear manufacturers) later posted to its Facebook page, attracted over 100,000 views and received nearly 2,000 shares in the first few hours of going live. The first descent was suddenly viral, but not without controversy.

"Just dumb," read one comment.

"I'm calling that bad etiquette. Bad safety and stupid," read another.

Yet countless more comments rallied in defense of Wingert and his crew, arguing that, as with any adventure, not everything goes according to plan. Risk is inherent in any endeavor, especially when it comes to tackling first descents.

"A lot of people who saw it as negative thought it was dumb luck, like we weren't talented paddlers, just dumb kids with GoPros," Wingert says. "It brought me down in the moment," but not so much that he turned away from social media altogether.

Whether he's cranking out laps

on the Top Yough in his backyard or making multi-day kayaking trips down to western North Carolina, Wingert is as active on social media as he is in a boat and says that Facebook in particular has been a useful tool in organizing paddling trips. What's more, the 'group' function on Facebook allows area paddlers to post updates on rivers and creeks, notifying other river users about access issues, environmental threats, water levels, and, ironically, new strainers. A simple status update can rally a post-work group paddle. Stranded at the takeout without a shuttle?

"It's great for that kind of thing," Wingert says. "It's cool to see what everyone else is doing, unless you're stuck at work and your friends are paddling."

While Wingert is hesitant to say whether or not he would ever attempt Cucumber Falls again, he is certain that his group won't be the last. And as for the falls? A sign posted by state park officials the day after Wingert's first descent now reads loud and clear. Cucumber Run closed to boating.

The closure of Cucumber Run and the subsequent falls is just one of many instances where the power of social media has forced officials to respond in a way that's not exactly favorable to outdoor

enthusiasts. One of the biggest culprits these days? Instagram.

"It's a really touchy subject," says western North Carolina-based photographer Justin Costner on shooting photography in public lands.

Though Costner himself has never had any run-ins with the Forest Service, he's heard enough horror stories about court dates and hefty legal fines that he's taking the better-safe-than-sorry approach by purchasing a commercial photography permit.

"I understand not violating the forest, but I think people should have the right to shoot photos from their adventures and trips," he says.

Costner, like any respectable outdoor recreationalist, practices Leave No Trace (LNT) principles and respects even the strictest of regulations in areas like the Linville Gorge Wilderness, but not all photographers are as considerate.

In March 2014 for instance, popular Instagrammer Trevor Lee (@trevlee) was charged with nine misdemeanors for camping and climbing trees in undesignated areas of Yosemite in pursuit of a better angle. Later that same year, Casey Nocket (@creepytings) made national news when she posted Instagram photos of portraits she had painted on rocks in eight national parks. Though Nocket called it "art," the park service

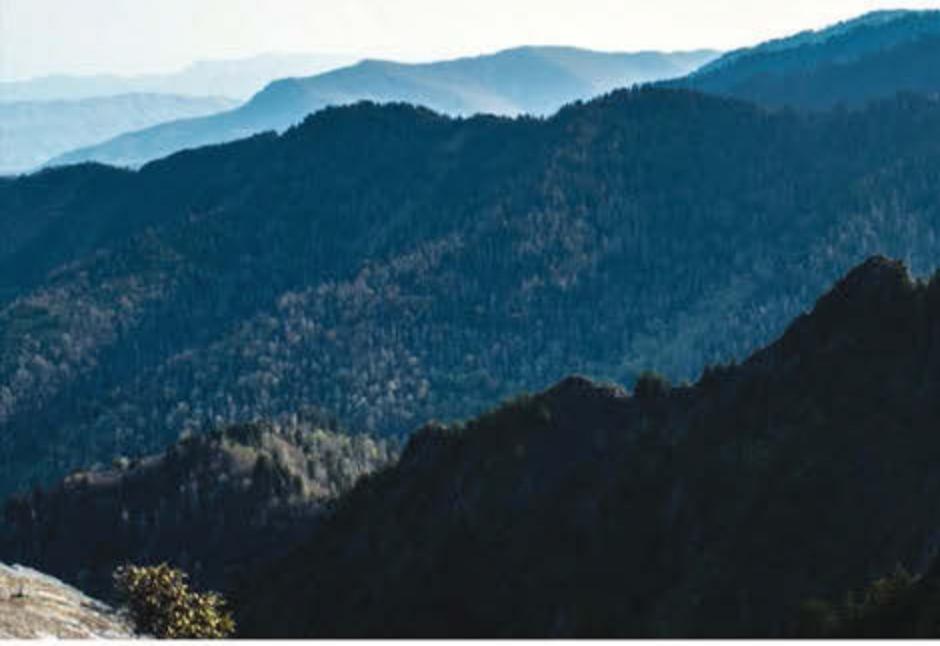
had a different word for it: vandalism. Lee and Nocket are extreme examples of a gram-gone-bad, but their trials should serve as warning to Instagram users with tunnel vision for the perfect shot.

In general, though, the average Instagram user is an amateur photographer with a trigger-happy finger and a desire to be inspired. That's how Jessica Georgia (@jessicageorgia) came to decide to thru-hike the Appalachian Trail and document all 2,180 miles of the journey through her Instagram feed.

"One of my passions and hobbies is photography," Georgia says. "That's initially what got me into Instagram, but then I started finding outdoor locations I didn't even know existed."

From there, Georgia started getting inspired in a big way, and not just to take more photographs: hiking became her newfound love. The idea of thru-hiking the Appalachian Trail was romantic to Georgia, who, at 30 years old, is both a wife and a mother to a 12-year-old daughter. But when her family hiked through the Grayson Highlands during peak thru-hiking season, Georgia got the affirmation she needed that the A.T. was her calling.

"It was so inspiring and I was so envious," Georgia recalls, "but at the same time, I didn't know if I could do it."



Yet just a year later, Georgia was taking her first steps along the white blaze at Springer Mountain. To ease the distance between mom-on-the-trail and family-at-home, Georgia says she tries to update her Instagram as frequently as possible so her daughter may be able to better grasp what a thru-hike actually entails.

Take a quick scroll through her feed and you'll see the good and the bad of thru-hiking: swollen feet, bug bites, fellow hikers, trail angels, sweeping vistas. Following Georgia's Instagram is about as close as you can get to hiking the trail yourself without ever leaving your home. And for Georgia, the supportive network of followers has been just as rewarding to her as the hike itself.

"It's encouraging when you can post something to Instagram and have people say, 'That's amazing Jess keep going!' Having that community cheering you on is definitely a mental boost," something that, as any thru-hiker can attest to, will surely brighten even the worst of days.

Like Georgia, that sense of community is what I cherish about social media. Though my Facebook feed is often plagued with incoherent political and personal rants, it's proven invaluable as a tool for making connections and finding story ideas. In fact, each and every

JESSICA GEORGIA ENJOYS THE VIEWS FROM CHARLIES BUNION IN GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK.

photo by JESSICA GEORGIA

one of the people I interviewed for this story were all contacted initially via social media, be it through Facebook or Instagram.

But, as nearly all of my subjects pointed out, that's not to say there aren't pitfalls to the platforms. Do I think there's such a thing as "oversharing"? Yes: I don't need to see everything you eat. Do hashtags annoy me? When there are more hashtags than caption copy, most definitely. Does social media dictate the way I choose to spend my time in the outdoors?

Absolutely not.

As I sat atop that summit watching the rising of the sun, the weight of a battery-less camera sinking into my lap, I wasn't thinking about the likes and comments I wouldn't receive. I was thinking how damn lucky I was to be me in that moment witnessing one of the most overlooked miracles of this world.

As Mark Eller from IMBA so simply put it, "People have to remember that you can turn it off if you want to."

So turn it off, if you want to. *



True to the Trail



NO FLUORESCENT LIGHTS. OR NINE TO FIVE.
CARPOOLS CANCELED. CONFERENCE CALLS CANNED.
E-MAIL OFF. SOCIAL MEDIA SIDELINED.
DEADLINES DESERTED.
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MILES OF MISSED WORK.
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Oboz is designed in Bozeman, Montana by a small group of avid outdoor types for hikers, runners, backpackers and anyone else who savors the trail.



ENGINEERING DREAMS



BEST SWIMMING HOLES TO JUMP INTO THIS SUMMER

by DARREN DAHL

Nothing kicks off the summer better than the sound of the human body connecting with a refreshing pool of water. Fortunately for those of us who live in the Southern Appalachians, deep, cool swimming holes abound. Cooling off can be even more adventurous at these cliff jumping hot spots.

NORTH CAROLINA SKINNY DIP FALLS

Imagine a scene out of the *Lord of the Rings* where, after trekking along a half-mile trail through the woods, you descend into a hidden cove shielded by the forest canopy above.

A swift creek makes its home here and, once you traverse the moss-covered bridge, you climb out onto a rocky promontory and leap into a deep pool of water chilly enough to give you goose bumps just thinking about it. But this is no feat of CGI: you've arrived at Skinny Dip Falls, situated just south of Mt. Pisgah along the Blue Ridge Parkway. With literally hundreds of hiking trails in the area, including the Mountains-to-Sea Trail, which intersects the trail to the falls, this swimming hole makes for a refreshing end to an active day in the woods.

CLIFF JUMP HEIGHT: 15 feet

FEAR FACTOR: 🧟🧟

NEARBY FUN: Graveyard Fields, Sliding Rock, Looking Glass Rock

NORTH CAROLINA

TURTLEBACK FALLS

It's hard to find a prettier place on this planet than Gorges State Park, a nearly 8,000-acre tract of second-growth forest acquired from Duke Energy in 1999. It's located near the border separating North and South Carolina. But it's the waterfalls along the Horsepasture River, which tumbles through neighboring Pisgah National Forest, that lure aquatic adventurers interested in a deep dip. It's at Turtleback Falls, also called Umbrella Falls by some, where you'll

ST. MARYS FALLS OFFERS ONE OF THE BEST CLIFF JUMPS AND SWIMMING HOLES IN SOUTHERN APPALACHIA. LEDGES SURROUND THE SWIMMING HOLE, OFFERING A 20-FOOT PLUNGE INTO THE REFRESHING SPRING-FED WATERS OF THE ST. MARYS RIVER.

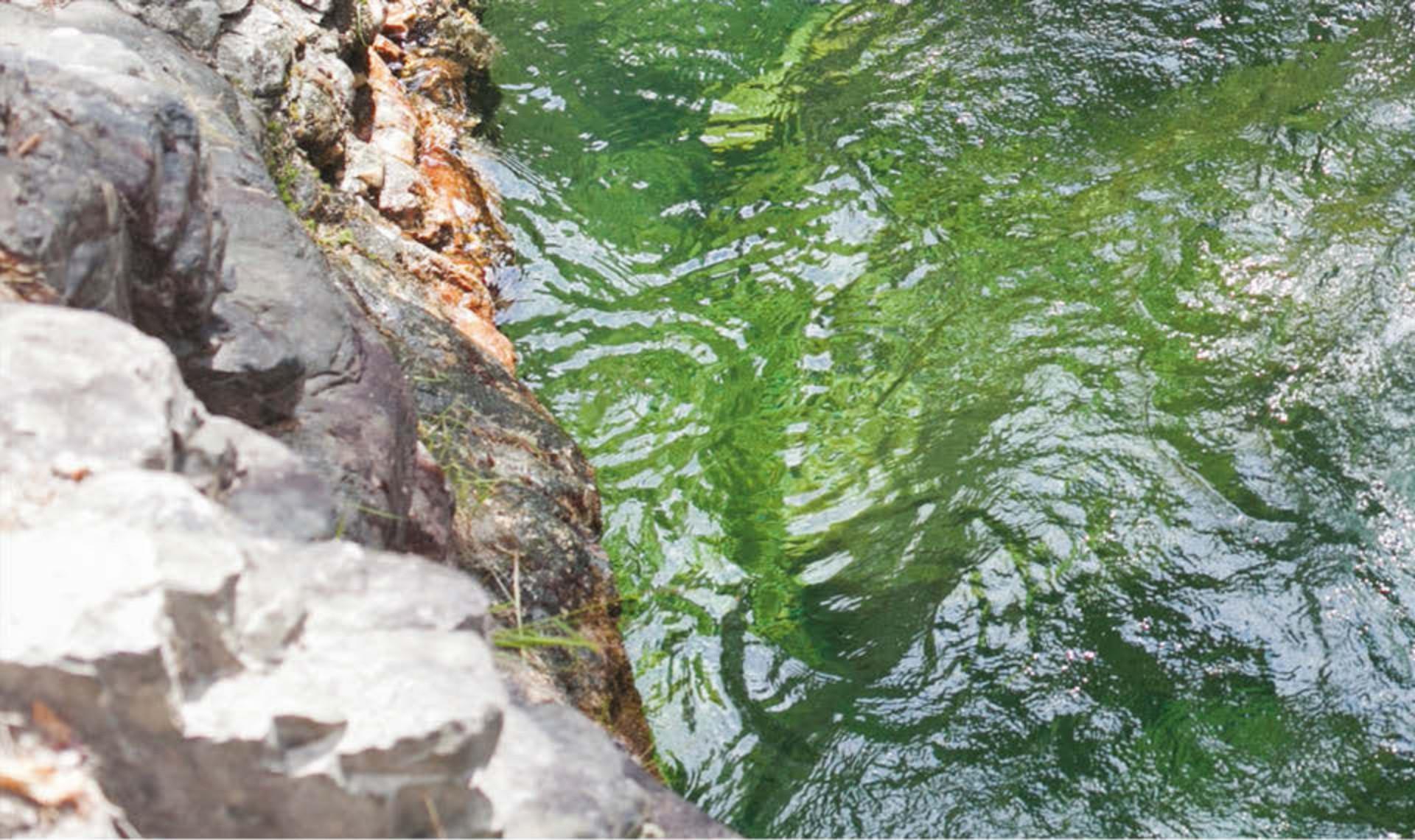
photos by TOM DALY

get the chance to submerge yourself in the so-called "Chug Hole" after a butt-slide down or leap off the (relatively) smooth and sloped launch strip that does look an awful lot like a turtle's shell.

CLIFF JUMP HEIGHT: 20 feet

FEAR FACTOR: 🧟🧟

NEARBY FUN: Gorges State Park, Rainbow Falls, Hidden Falls



NORTH CAROLINA / TENNESSEE ELK RIVER FALLS / TWISTING FALLS

What if we told you that there is a river that offers not just one but two different plunge pools along its length, with each one in a different state? That's exactly what you'll find along the Elk River, which connects North Carolina and Tennessee. If you're feeling ambitious about pulling off a double dip in a day, head toward the town of Banner Elk where you can find Elk River Falls, also called High Falls on maps, due to the 75-foot-high waterfall that's carved out a deep oval beneath it. The falls, whose roar you'll hear from far away, draw large crowds in the summer, especially because they are very easy to get to. While there are some fun rocks and ledges to jump off, we don't suggest trying to jump anywhere near the top of the falls themselves.

ELK RIVER FALLS

CLIFF JUMP HEIGHT: 50 feet

FEAR FACTOR:

NEARBY FUN: Julian Price Memorial Park, Twisting Falls, Blue Ridge Parkway

After toweling off, it's time to get back behind the wheel to head downstream into Tennessee and your next destination: Twisting Falls, also known as Twisted or Compression Falls. You'll have to do a bit of backtracking and looping around to cover the 16 miles or so of road before you'll reach the river's sister set of falls, which are just four miles downstream. You'll then need to trek down a steep trail to reach Twisting Falls, which rise about 30 feet high. Once there, you'll find plenty of plunging possibilities in the pool at its base, including the chance to jump off several low-slung rocks. A less recommended way to enjoy the spot

(accidents have happened here) starts by climbing up a rope which gives you access to launching points higher up along the apex of the falls.

TWISTING FALLS

CLIFF JUMP HEIGHT: 30 feet

FEAR FACTOR:

NEARBY FUN: Elk River Falls, Blue Ridge Parkway, Roan Mountain State Park

TENNESSEE

BABY FALLS

Millions of visitors flock to Great Smoky Mountains National Park every year, winding their way along its roads to gape at the vistas and greenery. But on the warmer days, those visitors would be wise to aim their vehicles toward the southern section of the Cherokee National Forest that forms the border of Tennessee and North Carolina. It's there they will find the refreshing

waters of the Tellico River, which create a great place to swim at Baby Falls. While smaller than the Bald River Falls that rumbles nearby, Baby Falls is one that offers the best opportunities to take a flying jump from the top of the falls and into the Tellico's current, which courses about 15 feet below you.

CLIFF JUMP HEIGHT: 15 feet

FEAR FACTOR:

NEARBY FUN: Bald River Falls, Lake Santeetlah

GEORGIA

JACKS RIVER FALLS

Can you imagine spending a better day than by hiking along a rushing river until, at about the turnaround point, you encounter the perfect swimming hole carved out by those same flowing waters? That's the kind of experience that awaits you along the Jacks River Trail in North



Georgia's Cohutta wilderness. If you're willing to put in a few miles with your feet, you'll be rewarded with the chance to jump off one of the rocks that encircles the 11-foot-deep refreshing pool of Georgian H2O waiting at the base of Jacks River Falls. If you're really feeling frisky, you can take your turn to jump off the high point of the falls, which looms 20 feet high.

CLIFF JUMP HEIGHT: 20 feet

FEAR FACTOR:

NEARBY FUN: Ocoee Whitewater Center, Chattahoochee National Forest

actually serves as a great basecamp to set out on adventures into the nearby national forest named for our country's first president, George Washington. That's where you'll find St. Marys Falls, where the St. Marys River tumbles into a cozy swim hole, which is surrounded by a series of ledges that, if you're bold enough to climb up and out onto them, make for decent jumping platforms.

CLIFF JUMP HEIGHT: 20 feet

FEAR FACTOR:

NEARBY FUN: George Washington National Forest, Cave Mountain Lake, Blue Ridge Parkway

VIRGINIA

ST. MARYS FALLS

Eight U.S. presidents have been born in the state of Virginia—including Woodrow Wilson, who hailed from the city of Staunton. The city, which boasts a quaint downtown scene,

accumulated some grime after hiking in a few miles along a beautiful trail to find it. It's a bit of a tricky job to find your way since you'll actually cross the creek several times on your journey until you eventually reach your destination: a 14-foot-long by five-foot-wide hole formed by Devils Fork Creek that also drains downstream into a larger swimming hole. But how many bathtubs can you actually take a full-throttled leap into?

CLIFF JUMP HEIGHT: Less than five feet

FEAR FACTOR:

NEARBY FUN: Natural Tunnel State Park, Little Stony Falls

VIRGINIA

DEVILS BATHTUB

As the old saying goes, cleanliness is next to godliness. So what are we to make of a swimming hole called the Devils Bathtub? Quite a lot, actually—especially after you've

WEST VIRGINIA

WOODBINE; CRANBERRY RIVER

The New River Gorge and its surrounding area has long been a

magnet for adventure seekers—and for good reason. It's stunning. But there are also plentiful opportunities to explore the forests to the east of the gorge, such as the natural beauty that abounds in the nearby Monongahela National Forest. One choice spot among all those options is on the Cranberry River, which cuts east/west across the forest before depositing its waters into the Gauley River. Before reaching its destination, the river pauses in the Woodbine area near the Big Rock campground to form a deliciously cool spot with, aptly enough, a large rock to leap into the water from.

CLIFF JUMP HEIGHT: 10 feet

FEAR FACTOR:

NEARBY FUN: Summersville Lake, New River Gorge



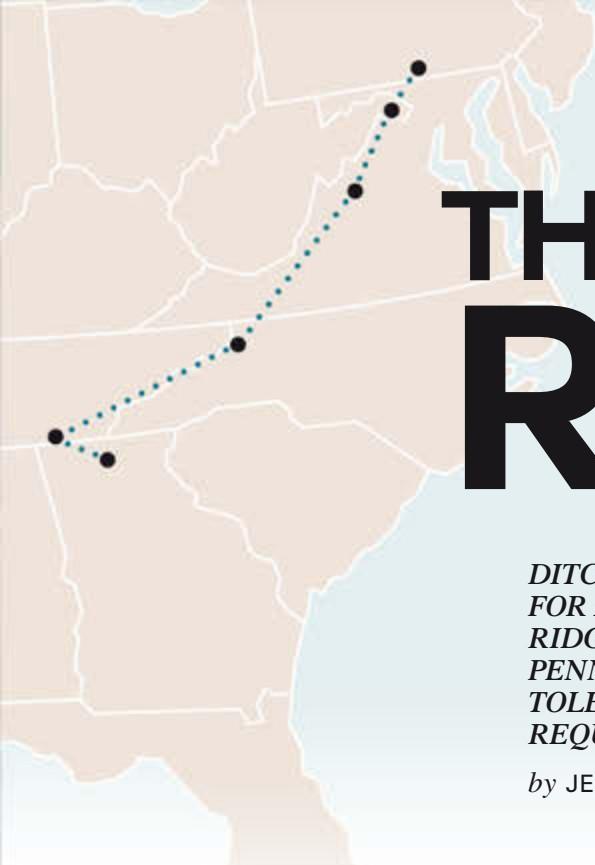
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THE QUINTESSENTIAL ROAD TRIP



DITCH THE HOTELS AND TOURIST ATTRACTIONS FOR AN AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCE ALONG THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS FROM NORTHERN GEORGIA TO PENNSYLVANIA. AN AFFINITY FOR BLUEGRASS, A TOLERANCE FOR CAMPING, AND A SENSE OF ADVENTURE REQUIRED.

by JESS DADDIO

DAY 1—2 | 52 MILES
BLUE RIDGE, GA./ ELLIJAY, GA.

Where better to begin your Blue Ridge journey than the base of those cobalt majesties. Part southern charm, part urbanite sophistication, the town of Blue Ridge, Ga., is quaint and lively, traditional yet contemporary. Tucked in between the Cohutta Wilderness Area (the largest contiguous tract of wilderness in the East) and the Chattahoochee National Forest, Blue Ridge is just a short drive away from some of the state's most rugged terrain.

Start your day on a sweet note with a trip to **Mercier Orchards** (mercier-orchards.com), Georgia's largest apple orchard. Consider stocking up on fried pies and fresh apple cider for your afternoon picnic on Lake Blue Ridge. **Surf Blue Ridge** (surfblueridge-sup.com) can get you hooked up with a stand up paddleboard for the day (\$40; four hours) and even offers free delivery to the Lake Blue Ridge parking lot to ease your logistical worries. For the avid angler, this lake offers more than stunning scenery—it's one of the few bodies of water south of the Great Lakes where walleyes swim aplenty.

As the sun sets over the mountains, wind down with a pint from **Blue Ridge Brewery** (blueridgebrewery.com). You won't have to go far to check into your room at **The Fernbrook Inn** (thefernbrookinn.com; rooms from \$149), so stay out, catch some tunes at the pub, order another pint (or two), and let that Georgia magic do its work.

The sweet and savory smells of French toast and sausage wafting

under your door will be sure to have you up and at it early the next morning (assuming you didn't close the brewery down). Eat a hearty breakfast at the inn. You'll need all the calories you can get. And bike tubes. If you don't have a spare, swing in at **Cartecay Bike Shop** (cartecaybikes.com) as you pass through Ellijay, the "Mountain Bike Capital of Georgia." If nothing else, Cartecay's owner Mike Palmeri is a local legend and is sure to offer some

entertaining conversation and a tip or two on where to ride.

Don't dawdle long, for the Pinhoti Trail awaits. Stretching for over 300 miles from Alabama to northern Georgia, the Pinhoti is quickly gaining a reputation among mountain bikers for technical terrain with an unparalleled wilderness feel. Roughly 140 miles of the trail wind through the northwestern corner of Georgia, and the fine folks at **Mulberry Gap Mountain Bike Get-A-Way** (mulberrygap.net) are more than happy to help you find the perfect ride.

Be forewarned—you can ride, or run, from your cabin door (starting at \$83 per night) or tent flap (sites from \$10 per night) at Mulberry Gap, but don't bank on a warm-up. Straight from the gate, you'll be climbing up those steep mountain ridges that looked so idyllic and tranquil from the lake. If you're trying to squeeze in more than one section of the Pinhoti (or simply want to spare your legs), the crew at Mulberry Gap will shuttle you to the top (rates from \$15) so you can rip it downhill and be back in time for the family-style dinner that's served every night in the barn. Ginni, the resident guest-mother and



RIDERS SPLASH THROUGH THE BEAR CREEK TRAIL IN NORTHERN GEORGIA
photo by JESS DADDIO

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Photo: Braden Gunem with the Copper Spur UL2 mtnGLO™, weighing 2lbs 14oz - Nicaragua

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Our Martinsburg Vacation

Berkeley County, West Virginia



We took the Historic Driving Tour of Berkeley County and there are so many beautiful buildings, farmland and orchards!



Geocaching is great around here... lots of cache sites!



Bloomin Bash - awesome festival, thousands of daylilies, music & more!



This is one of the many museums open to the public. Morgan Cabin was built in 1734

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mastermind chef, will leave you so full on beef brisket and fresh salad, you'll have to loosen the belt before you hop on a mini-bike for a round of mini-bike-Jenga. No, I'm not kidding. And yes, mini-bike-Jenga is real. As in, *real hard*.

LIKE A LOCAL

ANDREW GATES, co-owner, Mulberry Gap Mountain Bike Get-A-Way

GO-TO RIDE: Mountaintown Creek Trail > Bear Creek Trail > Pinhoti 1 > Pinhoti 2

PLACE TO CURE A SWEET TOOTH: Cantaberry

Café (cantaberry.com) for pie or **The Martyn House** (themartynhouse.com) for cookies

FAVORITE ACTIVITY OFF THE BIKE: Kayaking down the Cartecay River

YOU KNOW YOU'VE EXPERIENCED NORTH GEORGIA LIKE A LOCAL IF:

You can drift around the corners on a Forest Service road.

DAY 3—4 | 114 MILES
CHATTANOOGA, TENN.

After inhaling a plateful of Ginni's pancakes, you're ready to head north. Next stop, Chattanooga. The hour-and-a-half drive to Tennessee begins on GA-52, which snakes through the Chattahoochee National Forest and offers plenty of overlooks to break up the trip. So stop, smell the pine trees, soak in the views, snap a selfie. Then it's onward to Nooga, a metropolis compared to that sweet southern pace you've been living in Georgia.

Squeeze the last juice from your legs at **Raccoon Mountain** (outdoorchattanooga.com), a short 15-minute drive from downtown Chatttown. Ride, run, or simply stroll along the 22-mile trail system. Mountain bikers should be prepared to work for their ride, as only four miles of the trails are considered beginner friendly. The remaining 18 miles of singletrack are speckled with four- to six-foot drops, tight switchbacks, and overall steep terrain. But when you see the sweeping views of the Tennessee River Valley below, you'll know those gallons of Southeast sweat dripping



down your back were worth it.

And if the views didn't drop your jaw, the southern fried goodness afterwards at **Champy's Famous Fried Chicken** (champyschicken.com) surely will. Baked beans and slaw, hush puppies and sweet tea, piles of chicken and Mississippi mud pie. Styrofoam plates and checkered tablecloths never looked so good.

But for the health-conscious road rambler, **Flying Squirrel** (flyingsquirrelbar.com) might be more on par with your dinner cravings. This state-of-the-art watering hole and restaurant located in the heart of the Southside offers locally sourced food at an affordable price. Should you catch yourself in town on a Sunday morning, you'll definitely want to stop in. Where else can you enjoy live music over a plate of sweet potato hash and a beermosa? (Okay, forget the "health-conscious" thing.)

Your lodging for the next two nights is just around the corner at **The Crash Pad: An Uncommon Hostel** (crashpadchattanooga.com). Founded by the same team as Flying Squirrel, The Crash Pad is an upscale, LEED Platinum hostel (the only one of its kind) that offers guests everything from super bunks (\$30

THE CRASH PAD IS THE ONLY LEED PLATINUM HOSTEL IN THE WORLD

photo by MANDY RHODEN

per night) to private rooms (\$79 per night). The best part? The owners of the hostel are avid climbers and can point all you rock hounds in the right direction.

Sweltering summers in the South make it downright necessary to be an early riser—you can sleep when you're dead. Grab a bag of handmade croissants or oven-fresh cinnamon rolls from **Niedlov's Breadworks** (niedlovs.com) and put the pedal to the metal. Rock climbers can head to any one of the area's crags like **Foster Falls**, a sport climbers' haven, or **Tennessee Wall**, which provides trad lovers with everything from clean, 100-foot arêtes to bold face climbs. **The Stone Fort**, formerly known as Little Rock City, is the closest major bouldering area close to downtown Chattanooga and is the site for one of the now four Triple Crown Bouldering Series events in the fall.

But if climbing's not your thing, take a hike and cool down at Cherokee Falls and Hemlock Falls in **Cloudland Canyon State Park** (gastateparks.org). Though technically still in Georgia, this

Eddie Bauer EST. 1920

SHOP AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS:

ALABAMA

Tanger Outlets Foley - Foley
The Outlet Shops of Grand River - Leeds

GEORGIA

The Avenue East Cobb - Marietta
The Avenue West Cobb - Marietta
North Georgia Premium Outlets - Dawsonville
Sugarloaf Mills Outlet - Lawrenceville
Tanger Outlets Commerce - Commerce

KENTUCKY

Crestview Hills Town Center - Crestview Hills
Fayette Mall - Lexington
The Outlet Shoppes of the Bluegrass - Simpsonville

MARYLAND

Annapolis Mall - Annapolis
Arundel Mills - Hanover
Hagerstown Premium Outlets - Hagerstown
The Mall in Columbia - Columbia
Queenstown Premium Outlets - Queenstown
Tanger Outlets National Harbor - National Harbor
Tanger Outlets Ocean City - Ocean City
Towson Town Center - Towson

NORTH CAROLINA

Asheville Mall - Asheville
Carolina Premium Outlets - Smithfield
Charlotte Premium Outlets - Charlotte
Friendly Center - Greensboro
Hanes Mall - Winston-Salem
Mayfaire Town Center - Wilmington
Outlet at Concord Mills - Concord
Tanger Outlets Nags Head - Nags Head

SOUTH CAROLINA

Gaffney Premium Outlets - Gaffney
Tanger Outlets Charleston - Charleston
Tanger Outlets Hilton Head - Bluffton
Tanger Outlets Myrtle Beach - Myrtle Beach

TENNESSEE

Hamilton Place Mall - Chattanooga
Lebanon Premium Outlets - Lebanon
Tanger Outlets Sevierville - Sevierville
West Town Mall - Knoxville

VIRGINIA

Charlottesville Fashion Square - Charlottesville
Fair Oaks Mall - Fairfax
Leesburg Corner Premium Outlets - Leesburg
MacArthur Center - Norfolk
Short Pump Town Center - Richmond
Tysons Corner Center - McLean
Valley View Mall - Roanoke
Williamsburg Premium Outlets - Williamsburg

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state park is just a half hour's drive from Chattanooga and the sights are worth it. The out-and-back Waterfalls Trail packs a punch in just two miles, dropping over 400 feet to the waterfalls via a steep stairway system. Wouldn't it be nice if there were waterfalls at the top of those stairs, too?

And if the weather simply is not cooperating with your stay, Chattanooga's got you covered, literally. But instead of catching a movie, surfing the web, or doing laps at the **Tennessee Bouldering Authority** (tbagym.com), might I suggest a total change of pace? Embrace your inner child and head to **The Jump Park** (thejumppark.com) for a day. You can toss yourself into foam pits, test your balance on slacklines, and jump yourself silly on over 50 connected trampolines. Just don't eat too many cinnamon rolls before you go.

LIKE A LOCAL

JOHN YING, General Manager at *The Crash Pad: An Uncommon Hostel*

GO-TO CLIMB: Bouldering? Rocktown. Sport Climbing? Castle Rock. Trad? T-Wall

PLACE TO PARTY ON A TUESDAY: Flying

Squirrel. Half priced wine night. Full disclosure: Crash Pad and Flying Squirrel are owned by the same guys.

FAVORITE ACTIVITY OFF THE ROCK: First Free Sundays at the Hunter Museum

YOU KNOW YOU'VE EXPERIENCED CHATTANOOGA LIKE A LOCAL IF: You march into the stadium with the Chattahooigans at a CFC game.

DAY 5—6 | 426 MILES

LINVILLE GORGE / BOONE, N.C.

Hit the road before dawn as you make the long, five-hour haul from Chattanooga to the heart of western North Carolina. You can take a slightly shorter route up through Knoxville to your next destination, the Linville Gorge Wilderness, but if you prefer to avoid the mayhem and stress of interstate driving, head east on US-74 through scenic stretches of quiet Appalachian towns. As you curl through the Smokies, you'll pass



A CLIMBER SOAKS IN THE VIEWS FROM ATOP THE CAMEL IN THE LINVILLE GORGE

photo by JESS DADDIO

when you pop out on I-40, you're just a half hour from Asheville, a city famed for its exploding craft beer scene. You could stop and get tanked at any one of Beer City USA's 40-plus breweries, but alas, the mountains are calling and you must go. Of course, there's no harm in grabbing a half pour over lunch at **Wicked Weed Brewing** (wickedweedbrewing.com).

Once safely sober, continue your voyage northeast to one of the most iconic destinations in North Carolina—**Linville Falls**. Park at the Linville Falls Visitor Center and follow the Linville Gorge Trail down to the river. This out-and-back hike is just shy of two miles round-trip, but the going is steep, so proceed with caution. Swimming is not permitted at the base of the falls, so no dips in the pool, no matter how tempting it may be.

Should the beauty of the Linville Gorge enrapture you, there's a campground just up the road to satisfy your wild hair. The **Linville Falls Trailer Lodge & Campground** (linvillefalls.com) has a number of options for bunking up, from primitive tent sites (\$20 per night)

to log cabins (from \$60 per night). This leaves the Linville Gorge within quick driving access so you can spend a full day exploring caves, off-trail bushwhacking, or trad climbing to your heart's content.

In the event that you decide to continue on down the road after your Linville Falls hike, the town of Boone, N.C., is roughly an hour away. Thanks in part to the local university, there's a youthful, energetic vibe about Boone that makes for an active outdoors scene and an eclectic art community in the heart of Appalachia. Check in at the **Lovill House Inn** (lovillhouseinn.com; rooms from \$139) for a homey stay conveniently located off the Blue Ridge Parkway and less than a mile from Old Town. Fuel up at **Proper** (propermeal.com) for homemade southern food done right. There's a different special every day, like meatloaf or pulled pork, but even vegetarians will find a bowlful of Proper's mac n' cheese filling and delicious.

Grab your walking stick as you head out the door the next morning—**Grandfather Mountain**

and **Elk Knob** are two of North Carolina's newest state parks and both provide impeccably well-maintained trails leading to spectacular views of the North Carolina High Country. The Profile Trail on Grandfather Mountain traces the "profile" of the old man for whom the state park is named. Hikers can expect to see lush hardwood forests and unique rock features along the three miles to the summit. The hike to Elk Knob is not quite as steep and slightly shorter at 3.8 miles round-trip, so be sure to make time to soak in its panoramic views.

Mountain bikers and trail runners seeking an adrenaline fix can head over to **Rocky Knob Mountain Bike Park** (rockyknob.wordpress.com) to peruse the park's eight miles of technical trails. Rocky Knob also has four skills areas and a pump track so you can fine-tune your technique before your next ride.

At the end of the day, **Appalachian Mountain Brewery** (appalachianmountainbrewery.com) is certain to have a beverage to quench your thirst — IPAs, stouts, ales, even its very own cider. You can feel good about what you drink, too. For every pint you purchase, the brewery donates to a non-profit organization through the Pints for Non-Profits Program.

LIKE A LOCAL

CHELSEA ZACHER and THEA YOUNG, *Footsluggers* staff

GO-TO HIKE: Gragg Prong Falls

PLACE TO SPEND A RAINY DAY: Bald Guy Brew

FAVORITE ACTIVITY OFF THE TRAIL: First Fridays Art Crawl

YOU KNOW YOU'VE EXPERIENCED BOONE LIKE A LOCAL IF: You've been caught unprepared by the weather.

DAY 7—8 | 768 MILES

STAUNTON, VA. / HARRISONBURG, VA.

You'll have to say "adieu" to that high country paradise in between forkfuls of your locally sourced breakfast from **Melanie's Food**

Fantasy (melaniesfoodfantasy.com). There's about a four-hour drive ahead of you through most of the state of Virginia, but don't worry—you'll have a chance to stretch those legs upon arriving at **Saint Mary's Wilderness**. The roughly 10-mile hike through fern forests and alongside the Saint Mary's River make this wilderness trek a cool way to spend a summer day. The cherry on top is the waterfall located about five miles from the car. It's a popular place to take a dip and the base is deep enough for a jump from the rocks above, if you dare.

After the hike, continue north toward Staunton, a town where art and agriculture are seamlessly intertwined. Share an exquisitely cooked southern meal at **The Shack** (theshackva.com), an unassuming brick building where visitors can indulge in warm butter lettuce salad and maple quail. The cozy, one-room atmosphere immediately turns strangers to family, as the 26 non-matching chairs available are seated around seven communal-style tables.

Shack up for the night at **The Storefront** (the-storefront-hotel.com; \$159), a private two-floor space that's part B&B, part townhouse. Located in the heart of Staunton's historic district, you'll be within walking distance to a number of stores and restaurants, but with all the amenities of your own home, including a full kitchen, you may never want to leave.

At this point in your travels, if you haven't let the road be your guide, it's time to do so. And not just any road, mind you. The **Blue Ridge Parkway** (blueridgeparkway.org). This 469-mile ribbon of pavement traverses the Blue Ridge from just outside of Cherokee, N.C., all the way up to the parkway's northern terminus at Rockfish Gap, just 20 minutes outside of Staunton. It is arguably one of the best Sunday (or Monday, or Thursday) drives you can take, but if your eyes are growing weary, you can park at any number of trailheads and just start hiking.

The Appalachian Trail crosses the parkway a number of times, making

it easy to hop on the white blaze and walk until your legs scream. But for a hike with a view, try **Humpback Rocks** at milepost 5.8. The hike is only one mile one way, but don't be fooled—that's one mile straight uphill. There are benches along the way and the trail is wide and mostly gravel, so take your time and savor the burn. Once you see the 360-degree views of the surrounding Shenandoah Valley, you'll be glad you persevered.

Spend the remainder of your afternoon exploring Harrisonburg, Va., just 45 minutes up Interstate-81.



If pastimes like window shopping and people watching are not your cup of tea, grab your rod and head to the pristine waters of Mossy Creek, just a few minutes from where you'll be staying at the **Old Massanutton Lodge** (oldmassanuttenlodge.com; rooms from \$140). You'll need a license to fish at this classic limestone creek, in addition to a signed landowner permission card, so unless you happen to frequent the area regularly, consider going with **Mossy Creek Fly Fishing** (mossycreekflyfishing.com) under the guidance of the outfitter's Orvis endorsed instructors. Even

experienced anglers stand to learn something from these local experts.

Size up your Virginian experience with a farm-to-table pizza made from scratch at **Bella Luna Woodfire Pizza** (bellalunawoodfire.com) and a pint of The Great Outdoors Virginia Pale Ale from **Brothers Craft Brewing** (brotherscraftbrewing.com) located right in Harrisonburg.

WITH VIEWS OF THE SURROUNDING BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS, IT'S NO WONDER MOSSY CREEK IS A FAVORITE AMONG ANGLERS

photo by JESS DADDIO

DAY 9–10 | 852 MILES
CHARLES TOWN, W.VA / HARPERS FERRY, W.VA.

Road trips can no doubt induce exhaustive efforts to see and do as much as possible in the short spell of vacation time you're granted. It's called a "Fear of Missing Out," or FOMO. Though FOMO can be harnessed for motivation, it can also contribute to what I call the "burn out phase," where the idea of sitting in your hotel room and watching cable all day sounds more appealing than getting sunburnt and asking for directions.

Fortunately, the relaxed vibe of Harpers Ferry can rejuvenate your traveler's spirit. Just a stone's throw over the Virginia line at the confluence of the Shenandoah and Potomac Rivers, Harpers Ferry is as charismatic as it is historic. Stroll along the picturesque cobblestone streets and tour the museums in town, or head to the hills immediately upon arrival.

The **Chesapeake & Ohio** (or C&O as it is mostly referred to) **Canal Towpath** connects Washington, D.C., to Pennsylvania via an old trail nearly 185 miles in length. The 10-plus miles heading upstream out of Harpers Ferry are like riding back in time. Bring your bike and see how far you can go or rent a ride from **River & Trail Outfitters** (rivertrail.com; from \$21). The folks at the outfitter also offer guided services as well as shuttles along the C&O.

Of course, should you prefer to travel by two feet instead of two wheels, Harpers Ferry also serves as the headquarters for the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) and the not-quite, unofficial halfway point on the Appalachian Trail. You can head north on the A.T. right out of town and reach a short side trail in about a mile that leads to striking views of Weverton Cliffs. Keep on walking to Maine if the blaze speaks to you, but otherwise it's probably time to find a place to hole up for the night.

Lodging options range from any

LIKE A LOCAL

KYLE LAWRENCE, *A little bit of everything, Shenandoah Bicycle Company*

GO-TO RIDE: the Burg > Kaylor's Ridge > Fridley Gap

PLACE TO DANCE YOUR ASS OFF: **The Golden Pony** (goldenponyva.com)

FAVORITE ACTIVITY OFF THE MOUNTAIN: Eating delicious local veggie foods from the downtown farmers market and Friendly City Food Co-Op.

YOU KNOW YOU'VE EXPERIENCED HARRISONBURG

LIKE A LOCAL IF: You end up at the **Little Grill** (littlegrillcollective.com) for breakfast then return for Mexi Nite dinner all in the same day

one of the historic bed and breakfasts like the **Laurel Lodge** (laurellodge.com; rooms from \$135) to dirt-cheap (as in free) camping along the A.T. If you're not wanting to work for your campsite, the **Harpers Ferry Campground** (campingharpersferry.com; sites from \$29) is tucked right into the folds of the Potomac and offers front door access to tomorrow's adventure: rafting.

That's right. Get ready to go big. Cool off on your last day in the wild and wonderful state with a little dose of West Virginia whitewater. **River Riders** (riverriders.com) offers a number of options for getting on the river, whether it's in a guided raft or your very own inflatable kayak. The Potomac's mild class I-III rapids are the perfect place to play and learn the basics of paddling.

Should you get frustrated because your duckie doesn't want to stay in a straight line, or because you fell out of the raft five times, there's nothing a little West Virginia hooch can't fix. Stop in at the **Bloomery SweetShine** (bloomerysweetshine.com), the only distillery around, for a little post-paddle "artisanal blend of vice and virtue" in nearby Charles Town, W.Va. You probably worked up quite an appetite on the water, too. Cure that with a trip to **Dish** (wvdish.com) and scarf down a locally sourced, grass-fed burger or black bean burger, maybe a scoop or three of ice cream back in Harpers Ferry at Scoops, and call it a day. Your last adventures start in the morning.

LIKE A LOCAL

ALEXIS KNOTT, Sales and Service Director at River Riders

GO-TO HIKE: The Stone Fort Trail in Maryland Heights

PLACE TO STARGAZE: The Maryland Heights overlook

FAVORITE ACTIVITY OUT OF THE WOODS:

Skipper's for ice cream and **The Anvil Restaurant** for dinner

YOU KNOW YOU'VE EXPERIENCED HARPERS FERRY LIKE A LOCAL IF: You can say you've stood in three states and two rivers at the same time.

DAY 11—12 | 910 MILES
GETTYSBURG, PENN. / MICHAUX STATE FOREST

Michaux offers more than 90,000 acres of big trees and vast views, frigid waters teeming with trout, and over 60 miles of technical, rocky trails just begging to be explored. Whether by horseback, by foot, or by wheel, **Michaux State Forest** could quite literally be heaven on Earth. Of the 60 miles available to hikers, 37 of those are designated multi-purpose trails that allow mountain bikes, and for even the most experienced of riders, Michaux is sure to provide a challenge. In conjunction with the 130 miles of maintained gravel roads that weave throughout the forest, the possibilities for loops and levels of difficulty are endless.

As you make your way to the northernmost stretches of the Blue Ridge Mountain range, cruise over to **Gettysburg Bicycle** (gettysburgbicycle.com) to get all of your gear and beta needs. Michaux State Forest has a core group of riders who maintain a blog, **Mountain Bikers of Michaux** (mtbmichaux.org), and regularly hold group rides that are open to novice and experienced riders alike. Due to the occasional unmarked trail and wilderness feel of the forest, first-timers should consider trying to arrange a guided ride, either through the community or by tagging along on a shop ride Thursday nights at 6 p.m.

But perhaps you're not a singletrack ripper. Roll up your pant legs and go creek walkin' down the East Branch of the **Conococheague Creek** or either branch of **Antietam Creek**. Both of these streams are well stocked with trout and the gettin's good, even if you're not an angler.

For your last night on the road, take the rainfly off the tent, heck maybe even do away with the tent altogether, and lie out cowboy-style under the twinkling night sky—you have plenty of memories to keep

you pondering and stargazing well into the wee hours of the morning. Though Michaux State Forest requires a permit for camping, it's free and easy to acquire from the visitor's center. Primitive campsites are sprinkled throughout the forest but a few established ones with bathrooms are located with easy access to your car.

Rise in plenty of time to catch the sunrise an hour and a half away atop **Blue Mountain** at Waggoner's Gap. Located at the edge of the **Tuscarora State Forest**, this 125-acre parcel of land is owned by the Audubon Society. Expert bird watchers frequent the summit here for its spectacular hawk sightings. Make sure to bring a thermos of French press and some nutrition bars for the dawn patrol, but don't worry about needing too much energy for the hike—the parking lot is just a 500-yard stroll from the overlook. So. No excuses.

After satisfying your sunrise-hawk-watching fix, hit the state forest's namesake, the **Tuscarora Trail**. Pennsylvania is revered for its rocky terrain, and this trail certainly keeps in jive with the reputation. Running for over 250 miles from Virginia through Maryland and up into Pennsylvania, the Tuscarora Trail was created as an alternative route for the Appalachian Trail yet has always remained an independent footpath. This six-mile section is known as one of the rockiest chunks of the Tuscarora, so wear sturdy shoes.

You'll head south for six miles from the Waggoner's Gap parking lot to Flat Rock at the southern end of the state forest. A blanket of Pennsylvania countryside wraps around the Flat Rock overlook, giving visitors a 180-degree view of the Cumberland Valley and all of its charm. Hike on for a longer day, or head back for a roughly 13-mile out-and-back trip. This section also makes for a moderately intense trail run if your legs still have any life left in them.

Let your taste buds wander

beyond the Blue Ridge at any one of Carlisle's worldly restaurants. You can of course get your traditional plate of mac n' cheese and barbecue at **Redd's Smokehouse BBQ** (reddssmokehousebbq.com) but why not explore Belgian cuisine at **Café Bruges** (cafebruges.com) or drink

your weight in sangria at the Spanish and Moroccan tapas restaurant **Andalusia** (andalusiacarlisle.com)?

There's a lot to celebrate, and who knows—maybe your culinary instincts inspire your next road trip. So kick back and order another round. You'll need some liquid courage for your last adventure: the half-gallon challenge.

The challenge, if you can call it that, is seemingly simple. It's just you and a half-gallon of Hershey's ice cream from the **Pine Grove Furnace General Store**. As you suffer through bite after bite of chocolate Moose Tracks on an already full stomach, think about that sweet moment of success when you down the entire container and join the elite "Half Gallon Club."

Sure, about 99% of the club is made up of past or present A.T. thru-hikers, but it's okay. You worked hard for it.

LIKE A LOCAL

JES STITH, Owner of *Gettysburg Bicycle*

GO-TO RIDE: Teaberry > Three Stooges > Rattlesnake Run Road > Old Forge > Trucker > Rothrock Road > Tumbling Run

BEST WAY TO MAKE HISTORY COOL: Take your bike and ride around the Gettysburg Battlefield

FAVORITE ACTIVITY WHEN IT'S TOO HOT TO RIDE: Catch some tunes at **The Garryowen Irish Pub** (garryowenirishpub.net)

YOU KNOW YOU'VE EXPERIENCED GETTYSBURG LIKE A LOCAL IF: You eat tacos at Tanias

 **EXPERIENCE HARPERS FERRY** in this month's BRO-TV episode at BlueRidgeOutdoors.com/bro-tv



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THE FESTY EXPERIENCE

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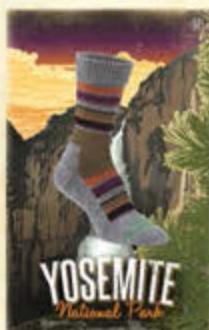
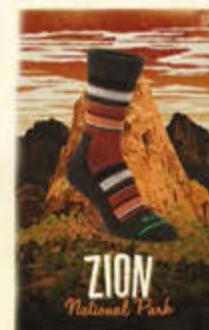
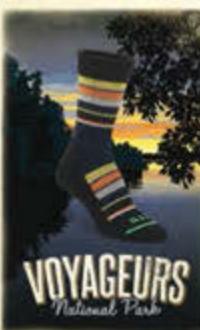
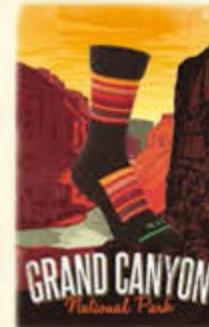
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OUTDOORS

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**AN OUTDOOR ADVENTURE IN THE BEAUTIFUL
ROANOKE VALLEY IN VIRGINIA'S BLUE RIDGE**



• A two night stay for two at the **Cambria Suites Roanoke** in a tower suite with a full hot buffet breakfast (based on availability).

CAMBRIA
hotels & suites.



- Dinner for two at **Wasena City Tap Room & Grill**
- Full day choice of rental for two. (Mountain Bike, paddleboard, kayak, or tubes) from **Roanoke Mountain Adventures**



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- Astral V-Eight PFD
- Eagles Nest Outfitters SingleNest Hammock
- Ice Mule Classic Cooler



ENTER TO WIN AT BLUERIDGEOUTDOORS.COM/CONTESTS

DESTINATION ADVENTURE 2015



In our 20th Anniversary Year, **Blue Ridge Outdoors** wants you to choose your own Destination Adventure. Get the inside scoop on the best places to eat, play and stay in the Blue Ridge. Summertime roadtrips are a great time to connect with family and friends while exploring all that the Blue Ridge has to offer. Within a day's drive you can get to any of the following locations, so pack your car and hit the road!



GO OUTSIDE AND PLAY!

Abingdon, Virginia

It's always playtime in Abingdon, whether you're cycling, hiking, fly fishing, or taking a scenic drive on a quiet country road. Take advantage of easy access to the Virginia Creeper Trail for an unforgettable bike ride through the mountains on this former railroad line.



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- VisitAbingdonVA
- VisitAbingdon
- VisitAbingdonVA

VisitAbingdonVirginia.com
276-676-2282

GET OUTDOORS!

- ★ Bike the famous **Virginia Creeper Trail** (insider tip—take a shuttle to the top for an easy ride down).
- ★ Cast a line in **Whitetop Laurel**, one of the best wild trout streams on the East Coast.
- ★ Meet wild ponies on your hike in **Grayson Highlands State Park**.
- ★ Finish your day in downtown Abingdon, with unique shopping, dining and lodging along Main Street.

DESTINATION ADVENTURE 2015

Alleghany Highlands, Virginia

The Alleghany Highlands is like no other place in Virginia. Scenic mountain views surround two charming downtowns with locally-owned restaurants, shops and artisan studios. A famous covered bridge combined with beautiful rivers and lakes means you'll find history over the water and lots of fun on it. Discover the many things that are "Uniquely Alleghany."



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[f AlleghanyHighlandsVA](#)

[t AlleghanyHighlandsVA](#)



[VisitAlleghanyHighlands.com](#)
540-962-2178

GET OUTDOORS!

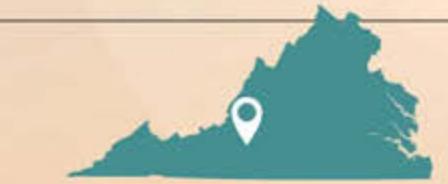
- ★ Explore the two rivers and two lakes of the **Alleghany Highlands Blueway** by kayak, canoe or tube.
- ★ Get back to nature by camping at **Douthat State Park** or **Lake Moomaw**.
- ★ Enjoy world-class fly fishing on the **Jackson River**.
- ★ Pedal on some of the best mountain biking trails in Virginia at **Douthat State Park**.
- ★ View a free trail guide at [alleghanyhighlandstrails.com](#)

Bedford, Virginia

Bedford – a place of discoveries. Follow Route 460 east to Bedford and visit the legendary Peaks of Otter along the Blue Ridge Parkway, Smith Mountain Lake, The National D-Day Memorial, and Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest. Explore the Bedford Wine Trail, Bedford Artisan Trail, and Centertown Bedford.



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[f BedfordAreaWelcomeCenter](#)
[t BedfordWelcomeCent](#)
[o BedfordWelcome](#)

[VisitBedford.com](#)
877-447-3257

GET OUTDOORS!

- ★ Enjoy the Bedford Wine Trail and Bedford Artisan Trail, as well as 25+ trails for hiking, biking, wildlife, and horseback riding.
- ★ Visit Smith Mountain Lake for boating, wakeboarding, sailing, marinas, boat rentals and more!
- ★ Bedford has ample camping, parks, and picnic sites.
- ★ For more activities, visit the Bedford Skate Park, the National D-Day Memorial, Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest, the Blue Ridge Parkway and Peaks of Otter!

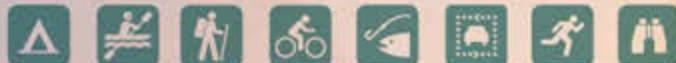
DESTINATION ADVENTURE 2015



Franklin County, Virginia



Nestled along the rolling foothills of Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains, Franklin County boasts an array of things to see and do, from exciting outdoor adventures to unique cultural experiences. Explore the many scenic corners of this community, where every side road opens up new vistas.



GET OUTDOORS!

★ Cast your line along **Smith Mountain Lake**—ranked a top 100 bass lake by *Bassmaster Magazine*.

★ Revel in outdoor adventure with paddling, fishing, camping and more at **Philpott Lake**.

★ Enjoy a leisurely float along the blueways of the **Pigg, Blackwater** and **Smith Rivers**.

★ Lace up your running shoes, then sample local craft beer at the annual **Oktoberfest** and **5K Trail Race**.



The Proof is in Franklin County



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VisitFranklinCountyVA.org
540.483.3030



VisitFranklinCountyVA



VisitFrankCoVa



EAT



PLAY



STAY

Homestead Creamery – Enjoy locally-made, all-natural milk, creamy, hand-dipped ice cream cones, and more at this local gem. **540-721-2045**

Bootleggers Café – Located in Historic Downtown Rocky Mount in the former, 1929-era Coca-Cola Bottling Company, and featuring burgers, BBQ, entrées, craft beer and wine.
bootleggerscafe.com

Bridgewater Marina – Boasting an array of watercraft rentals and a dockside store, the marina has been a popular go-to at Smith Mountain Lake for more than 25 years. **bwmarina.com**

Smith Mountain Lake Community Park – Open year round and offering a fishing pier, picnic shelter, playground, hiking trails, and a seasonal community beach.
www.franklincountyva.gov/parks/sml-beach

Bernard's Landing Resort & Conference Center – The 70-acre resort features panoramic views of Smith Mountain Lake, with 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom condominiums and townhomes with first-rate amenities. **bernardslanding.com**

Parrot Cove Boat Rentals – Enjoy a unique stay on Smith Mountain Lake with a one-of-a-kind houseboat rental. Each sleeps 6-10 and offers numerous amenities. **parrotcove.com**

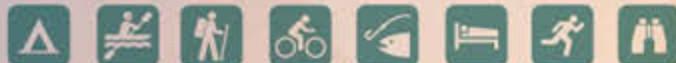
DESTINATION ADVENTURE 2015



Martinsville-Henry County, Virginia



Explore vibrant arts and culture, rich history and the outdoors in Martinsville-Henry County, Virginia. Located in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Southern Virginia, we have plenty of activities available to guarantee that you and your family have fun in record time.



GET OUTDOORS!

★ Enjoy biking single track, stacked-loop trails at **Mountain Laurel Trails**.

★ Discover hidden waterfalls, scenic vistas and abundant wildlife while boating **Philpott Lake**.

★ Fly fish for brown and rainbow trout along the **Smith River**.

★ "Borrow a Bike and Bring it Back" at the **Bike Barn** on the **Dick & Willie Passage Rail Trail**.

★ Float the river on tubes, canoes, kayaks or raft with **Smith River Outfitters**.



VisitMartinsville.com
888-722.3498



VisitMartinsville



MHCTourism



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EAT



PLAY



STAY

Enjoy a variety of dining options from American-fare to Asian-fusion and everything in between. Discover more online at:

VisitMartinsville.com/dine

New for 2015!

Chain of Fools Bicycle Repair, located in Uptown Martinsville, offers new and used equipment, accessories and repairs. Conveniently located near the Dick & Willie Passage Rail Trail, the shop staff lead weekly guided rides. ChainOfFoolsBicycles.com

Philpott Marina Group Campground - Located on Philpott Lake overlooking the marina, this campground is located in a private setting with 10 full-hook-up campsites and extra room for tents. The campground also features a picnic shelter and bathhouse facility. The entire campground can be rented for \$150 nightly and includes use of a marina slip. PhilpottMarina.com

Deer Island - For an adventurous camping experience, stay overnight on one of Philpott Lake's three islands. Accessible only via boat, Deer Island offers a panoramic view of the 3,000-acre reservoir and plenty of opportunities to enjoy nature. VisitMartinsville.com/Lakes

DESTINATION ADVENTURE 2015

LOCKN' Nelson County, Virginia
SEPTEMBER 10-13, 2015



LOCKN'



LOCKN' is **SEPTEMBER 10th - 13th** and features **ROBERT PLANT** & The Sensational Space Shifters, **PHIL LESH** with **SANTANA, MAD DOGS & ENGLISHMEN** (Tedeschi Trucks Band, Leon Russell, Dave Mason & Others), Jorma & Jack's **JEFFERSON AIRPLANE** 50th Anniversary, **WIDESpread PANIC, THE DOOBIE INCIDENT**, and more!



GET OUTDOORS!

- ★ Two side by side main stages with continuous flow of music.
- ★ Locknwood Music Space and performs at the Blue Ridge Bowl featuring Steve Earle & The Dukes, Deer Tick and Hot Tuna.
- ★ Come and enjoy Nelson County award-winning craft breweries, cidery, distilleries and wineries.
- ★ Explore over 30 miles of beautiful guided bike trail rides by Red Bull Professional Athletes.
- ★ Daily adult and childrens Yoga sessions plus Waterlockn' raft rides.



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LocknFestival.com



EAT



PLAY



LocknFestival



LocknFestival



LocknFestival



STAY

Lockn' Local Food Tent - Lockn' Festival is proud to showcase Nelson County's award winning chef Ben Thompson from The Rock Barn as well as local, regional and statewide cuisine.

The Brew Ridge Trail - Sample some of the greatest craft breweries at the Local Brewers Village including Devils Backbone, Blue Mountain, Wild Wolf, Starr Hill and other Nelson County and regional breweries.

Nelson County Orchards - Visit Nelson County's Fruit Loop and sample the many apple and peach orchards including Saunders Brothers, Drumhellers, Dickie Brothers and Silver Creek & Seamans.

Wheelhouse is Lockn's biking hub, offering bike rentals, a fully staffed bike repair shop, storage and guided tours. Lockn' also features daily morning Yoga, Water Lockn' (river tubing down the James River), and a sports tent to catch NFL and college football, among other activities.

A variety of options are available for camping at Lockn' Festival including safari-tent glamping, RV camping, tent and car camping and other lodging options in Nelson County including Wintergreen Resort.

For tickets and information: locknfestival.com

DESTINATION ADVENTURE 2015



Virginia's Blue Ridge



A mountain playground awaits in the Roanoke Valley in Virginia's Blue Ridge. Take a drive on the Blue Ridge Parkway, hike to the top of McAfee Knob on the Appalachian Trail, sample locally-brewed IPAs, and climb aboard a steam locomotive. And that's just the first day of your trip!



GET OUTDOORS!

★ Pedal down a thrilling mountain biking trail at **Carvins Cove Natural Reserve**.

★ See the stunning panoramic view from **Sharp Top Mountain** at the **Peaks of Otter**.

★ Paddle along the **Upper James River Water Trail**.

★ Take your picture in front of the iconic **Roanoke Star** atop **Mill Mountain**.

★ Watch the sunset from the shores of **Smith Mountain Lake**.



VisitVABlueRidge.com
800-635-5535



RoanokeValley



VisitVBR



VisitVBR



EAT

The River & Rail - Recently named one of the Best Southern Fine Dining restaurants in the country, Chef Aaron Deal boasts a menu that offers creative takes on many Southern classics.

riverandrailrestaurant.com

Texas Tavern - Finish the night with a Cheesy Western and become part of Roanoke's Millionaires Club at this local landmark.

texastavern-inc.com



PLAY

Vacation Packages - Book a customizable travel package that includes tickets to all your favorite attractions, upcoming events, and overnight accommodations. visitroanokeva.com/packages

Tours - Take a guided tour to experience Virginia's Blue Ridge with the help of an expert. Enjoy an outdoor excursion with Roanoke Mountain Adventures or sample our unique tastes with a Roanoke Food, Wine or Beer Tour.



STAY

Cambria Suites - With easy access to the Roanoke River Greenway, Blue Ridge Parkway and Downtown Roanoke, the luxurious Cambria Suites is the perfect spot to rest during your vacation.

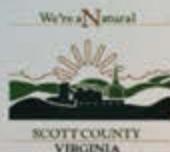
cambriasuitesroanoke.com

Camping - Pitch your tent under the starlit Blue Ridge sky at one of the many campgrounds in the region. visitroanokeva.com/hotels-lodging/camping

DESTINATION ADVENTURE 2015

Scott County, Virginia

Scott County, Virginia is a "Natural" for music lovers, history buffs, nature enthusiasts and vacationers of all types. Spend a day, a week or a month in this idyllic tip of Southwest Virginia, and you will find yourself yearning to call Scott County home.



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Shenandoah County, Virginia

Discover why *There's Only One Shenandoah County* in the Shenandoah Valley! With over 26% of Shenandoah County comprised of National Forest, Shenandoah County is the perfect destination to enjoy the great outdoors and wondrous scenery of the Shenandoah Valley.



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276-386-6521

GET OUTDOORS!



- ★ Float the **Clinch River**, one of the world's most ecologically-diverse rivers.
- ★ Hike the **Devil's Fork** and swim in the **Devil's Bathtub**.
- ★ Hook a trophy trout in **Bark Camp Lake** or **Little Stony**.
- ★ Walk in the footsteps of famed frontiersmen along the **Wilderness Trail**.
- ★ Explore the "Eighth Wonder of the World" at **Natural Tunnel State Park**.
- ★ Search for Big Foot along the **Chief Benge Trail** on **High Knob**.



- VisitShenandoah
- VisitShenCoVA
- ShenandoahTravel

ShenandoahTravel.org
888-367-3965

GET OUTDOORS!

- ★ Over 175 miles of trails perfect for hiking, biking, and horseback riding.
- ★ Experience the largest Off Highway Vehicle Complex on public land within the State of Virginia.
- ★ Make a splash as you paddle and fish the Seven Bends of the Shenandoah River.
- ★ Savour award-winning wines, craft breweries, and fresh local flavors.

DESTINATION ADVENTURE 2015



Haywood County, North Carolina



There's something very special about the NC Smokies. Some say it's the majestic rolling mountains, or perhaps it is the time-honored traditions in our southern Appalachian heritage. In **Waynesville** and **Maggie Valley** you'll find an authentic experience that keeps people coming back time after time.



GET OUTDOORS!

★ Hike the **Sam's Summit Loop Trail** in the Pisgah National Forest.

★ Cast a line in the three-mile section of the **Mountain Heritage Trout Waters**.

★ Take a dip in **Sunburst Swimming Hole**; this spot is a local favorite.

★ Cycle the **Coleman Mountain Panther Creek Loop**. Your road follows the long gone footprints of the large felines known as "painters".



Maggie Valley | Waynesville | Lake Jocassee | Canton | Chile

VisitNCSmokies.com
800-334-9036

VisitNCSmokies

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VisitNCSmokies



EAT



PLAY



STAY

The majority of Haywood County's restaurants are locally owned and operated. Because of this and the county's rich agricultural roots, many of these restaurants are committed to strongly supporting area farmers and producers by incorporating locally grown and produced products on a regular basis.

visitnsmokies.com/restaurants

Haywood County has year-round explorations for everyone: waterfalls, hiking trails, motor touring, golf, horseback riding, fishing, road biking, skiing, snowboarding, and so much more.

visitnsmokies.com/activities

In Haywood County you will find a little something for everyone, including a wide range of accommodations from moderate convenience to luxurious refinement. Take your pick of a variety of accommodations like hotels and motels in the heart of the action, quiet cozy inns, B&Bs with special amenities, luxury vacation rentals with panoramic views and rustic cabins nestled away from it all. To learn more about our lodging options, go to:

visitnsmokies.com/accommodations

DESTINATION ADVENTURE 2015



Pike County, Kentucky



Zip, Paddle & Saddle
3 for \$69

Enjoy a day out on the water or an afternoon of horseback riding where the Hatfields & McCoys called home, Pike County, Kentucky. Zipline atop the 8th wonder of the world, the Pikeville Cut-Through. Plan your Pike County getaway today, "Where Beauty Abides & Hospitality Flows!"



GET OUTDOORS!

★ Pikeville offers the **Zip, Paddle & Saddle Package**, which includes everything you need for ziplining, kayaking and horseback riding, all for \$69.

★ Enjoy a historic driving tour of the **Hatfield & McCoy** feud sites and experience beautiful Appalachian landscapes.

★ Paddle or fish the river that served as the battle line between the **Hatfields & McCoys**, **The Tug**, or enjoy Pikeville's blue water **Levisa Fork River**.



Pike County
Tourism, Convention & Visitors Bureau

TourPikeCounty.com
800.844.7453. • 606.432.5063



PikeTourism



HillbillyDays



HillbillyDays



EAT

Hilton Garden Inn Grill of Pikeville - Enjoy sumptuous buffets that are prepared with seasonal, fresh and nutritious ingredients. Includes a selection of juices, coffee, herbal teas and milk.



PLAY

The Blue Raven - Locally owned restaurant featuring Appalachia staples with unique twists. Recognized by the state of Kentucky for its delicious, Kentucky grown ingredients.



STAY

White Lightning Zipline - Pikeville's premiere zipline features 8 lines up to 1000' long!

Dreamz Stables - Ride horses through the beautiful mountains of Eastern Kentucky. Perfect for riders of any skill level.

Hampton Inn - Start your day off right with Hampton Inn. Located in the heart of Pikeville, Hampton Inn offers visitors comfort and convenience atop their many other accommodations.

Hilton Garden Inn - Offering a full array of accommodations, from a top quality restaurant to a fitness area, business center and pool. You will love your stay, satisfaction guaranteed.

Holiday Inn - Boasting a convenient location, as well as amenities like a free, hot breakfast and indoor pool, it's the place to "Stay Smart."

DESTINATION ADVENTURE 2015

Mercer County, West Virginia

Explore new experiences or freshen up on pastimes such as rock climbing, hiking, mountain biking, and ATV outings. Spend an evening cheering at one of our many sporting events, including two major-league sponsored professional baseball teams, or slow down and get in touch with nature on a fishing excursion.



GET OUTDOORS!

★ Enjoy a weekend of all that **Camp Creek State Park & Forest** has to offer.

★ Experience **Bluefield City Park's** hiking and biking trails and take a ride on the **Ridge Runner Train**.

★ Cool off in the **Princeton City Park's** Olympic-size pool with waterslide.

★ Pack a picnic lunch and enjoy breathtaking views atop **East River Mountain Overlook**.

★ Climb the stone staircase at **Pinnacle Rock State Park** and enjoy a panoramic view 3,100 feet above sea level.



EAT

The Railyard - Open Wednesday through Saturday, the Railyard in downtown Bluefield offers fantastic food, relaxing cocktails, and live music in a friendly, laid back atmosphere.

Portabella's - Enjoy delicious Italian cuisine in a relaxed and inviting atmosphere in downtown Bluefield. Choose from salads, pizzas, pastas, subs and more!



PLAY

Glenwood Park - 55-acre lake, picnic shelters, playgrounds, 18-hole miniature golf, tennis courts, biking trails, rowboats and paddle boat rentals. Pack a picnic and bring the family for some great fun!

Hatfield McCoy Trails - Managed ATV trail system with 55+ miles of trails. The newest being the Pocahontas Trail in Mercer County. Load up the ATV's, grab your friends & family and head out to Bramwell for some fun on the trails!



STAY

Buffalo Trail Cabins, Cottages, and Campground - Offering nightly cabin rentals, a campground, RV sites with full hook-ups, and tree-house rentals. Relax and enjoy the beautiful scenery on the outdoor deck of the restaurant and bar.



VisitMercerCounty.com
800-221-3206



MCCVB

DESTINATION ADVENTURE 2015

Blackwater Falls / Canaan Valley / Tucker County, West Virginia

Welcome to a high-mountain paradise where there's always something new to discover during four seasons of adventure. And while new highway (Rte. 48) improvements can make getting here faster, you'll still want to take your sweet Tucker time leaving. Contact us for our new Visitors Guide.



Marion County, West Virginia

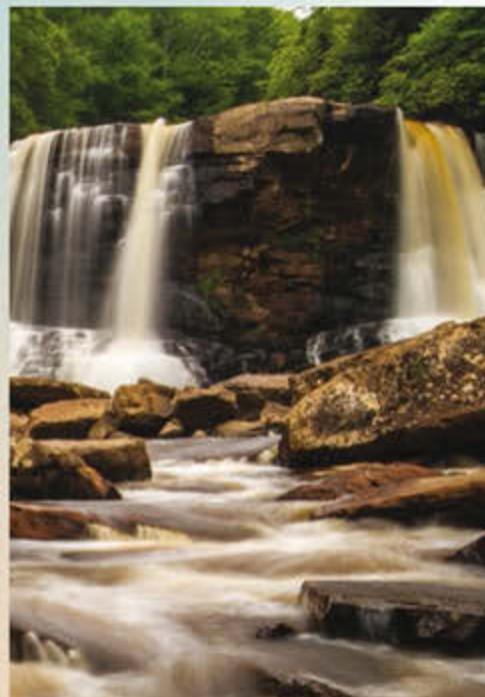
The mountains move a little slower in Marion County. Take time for some simple, old-fashioned fun. Bike along the rail trails leisurely. Relax on the banks while fish tug your line. It's not just about adventure. It's about time together. Slow down here, and enjoy.



Tucker County, West Virginia

TuckerCounty_WV

TuckerCounty_WV



CanaanValley.org
800-782-2775

GET OUTDOORS!

★ Now is the time to get out the hiking sticks, oil up the mountain bike and tie some new fishing flies.

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Convention & Visitors Bureau of Marion County
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GET OUTDOORS!

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★ Kick back and cast a fishing line at the lake, or below the whitewater at **Valley Falls**.

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★ Challenge one another at the state's best (and most beautiful) disc golf courses.

★ Trot along on horseback, and take in views of the mountain vistas.



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- MorgantownCVB
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TourMorgantown.com
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GET OUTDOORS!

- ★ Whitewater rafting on class III-V rapids or a leisurely family float, guided raft trip and ducky tours.
- ★ Four amazing zip lines lead to an aerial bridge and rappel station at **WVU's Adventure WV**.
- ★ Visit **Cathedral State Park**, an ancient hemlock forest of majestic proportions and trees up to 90 ft.
- ★ **Hike Coopers Rock State Forest:** 50 miles of trails and a 1,200-ft. scenic overlook.



- Hagerstown-Washington County Convention and Visitors Bureau
- HagWashCoCVB
- VisitHagerstown

VisitHagerstown.com
888-257-2600

GET OUTDOORS!

- ★ Bike along our 183 miles of the **C&O Canal**, or ride in a canal boat at the **Cushwa Basin** in **Williamsport**.
- ★ Paint the town red in our **Arts & Entertainment District** in Hagerstown!
- ★ Visit our Potomac River outfitters for serene rafting, kayaking or some whitewater thrills.
- ★ Taste some award winning wines along the **Antietam Highlands Wine Trail** amidst scenic vistas that will take your breath away.

DESTINATION ADVENTURE 2015



Deep Creek Lake, Maryland



Choose from four seasons to visit for an almost endless list of recreation. The Deep Creek Lake area is well known for tough road races, annual festivals, including Tunes & Brews, and spectacular views, like the highest point in Maryland on Backbone Mountain.



GET OUTDOORS!

★ We have three canopy tour ziplines (large, medium and small)—great for all ages!

★ There are many other on-mountain activities—Segway Tours, Chairlift Rides, Disc Golf and more.

★ Try whitewater rafting, riverboarding and kayaking on the world's only mountaintop re-circulating whitewater course!

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★ **Deep Creek Lake** offers paddleboarding, kayaking, swimming, wakeboarding, waterskiing and all other splashy things!



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PLAY



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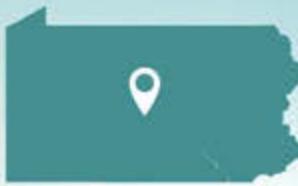
The **Deep Creek** area is full of lakeside dining, or venture to one of the nearby small towns for quaint cafes and soda fountains!

Play is what Wisp does best! The new **High-5 Pass** includes a great sampling of all the popular activities including the mountain coaster, spider monkey adventure, disc golf, chairlift ride and more for only \$64.

The **Wisp Resort Hotel** is smack-dab in the middle of all the action at Wisp. Plus, the indoor pool makes it great for rainy days—but we aren't saying it rains here... Check out the awesome lodging package including Cork & Canvas or the Maryland Music to My Ears Package.

Choose from over 800 vacation rental homes in the area, many that are lakefront. Go to visitdeepcreek.com, which can guide you to the various vacation rental agencies in the area.

DESTINATION ADVENTURE 2015

State College, Pennsylvania

See for yourself why *National Geographic* named State College one of its "Top 100 Adventure Towns." Tackle an adventure by day and in only minutes be in the heart of downtown sipping on local craft beverages by evening. Contact us to find out more!



GET OUTDOORS!

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pennscave.com



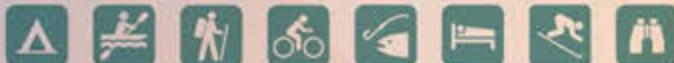
Relax and unwind at the **Nature Inn at Bald Eagle State Park**, overlooking Sayers Lake. Land and water activities await when you step outside your door.
natureinnatbald eagle.com

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bellefontekoa.com

DESTINATION ADVENTURE 2015

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Check out the beautiful Laurel Highlands, a 3,000-square-mile region home to PA's highest mountain (3,213 ft.), deepest river gorge within the class IV Youghiogheny, and thousands of miles of scenic and challenging hiking and mountain biking trails.



GET OUTDOORS!

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★ Hike the Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail to Baughman Rock for a birds-eye view of PA's deepest river gorge.

★ Run the Youghiogheny River through Ohiopyle State Park for class IV rapids.

★ Climb the mountain biking trails at Forbes State Forest.

★ Challenge yourself to the Seven Springs Mountain Resort's Marathon on the Mountain, full or half, on November 7, 2015.



LaurelHighlands.org
800-333-5661

Laurel Highlands
Visitors Bureau

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EAT

Ohiopyle House Café - This Ohiopyle hot spot tucked along Grant Street is a fun place to grab a craft beer and a gourmet burger after a day on the trail or in the water.



PLAY

Stone House Restaurant - The delicious food and craft beers served at this 175 year old inn are well worth the quick 15-minute drive from Ohiopyle to Route 40.



STAY

Advance Kayak Instruction - If you're ready to kick it up a notch, sign-up with Wilderness Voyageurs and hit the east coast's gem the Upper Yough. With seasonal releases every Monday, Friday and Saturday, its guaranteed paddling!

Three Day Adventure Package - There's so much to do in the Laurel Highlands and you don't know where to begin. Laurel Highlands River Tours Three Day Adventure Package offers rafting, rock climbing and zip lining all in one adventure-filled trip!

Kentuck Campground at Ohiopyle State Park

- Yurts, camping cottages, pet friendly tent sites close to natural water slides, beautiful waterfalls, rafting, trails and more!

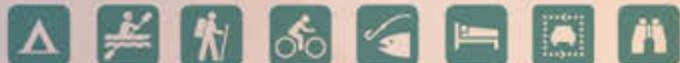
Seven Springs Mountain Resort offers overnight lodging packages, with adventure amenities like a downhill bike park, zip-line & canopy tour, and ORVIS fly-fishing excursions!

DESTINATION ADVENTURE 2015

Central Pennsylvania's Susquehanna River Valley



From hiking, mountain biking or any other outdoor adventure you may choose, to spending a day visiting wildlife sanctuaries and amusement parks with the family, you can find it in Central PA's Susquehanna River Valley. The only question left to ask is... Where is your fun?



GET OUTDOORS!

★ Hop on your bike and hit the trails! Central PA's terrain offers bicycling for all riders from novice to expert.

★ Fish on! Penns Creek, a tributary to the Susquehanna River was voted one of "America's Top 100 Trout Streams" and continues to be publicized due to its great fishing.

★ Take on the terrain at the Anthracite Outdoor Adventure Area, a 6,500-acre family oriented off-highway vehicle recreation park.



VisitCentralPA.org
800-525-7320

Susquehanna River Valley

SusqRiverValley



EAT

The Fence Drive-In was established in the 1950's and still operates as a Car Hop Restaurant from mid-April until early October. Serving hand breaded fish, shrimp, scallops, chicken burgers and fresh cut fries.

Skeeter's Pit BBQ will have your mouth watering Signature Ribs to our Famous Pulled-Pork Barbeque, Chicken, and Brisket and cold beer, sure to hit the spot after a day of outdoor adventure.



PLAY



STAY

Canoe Susquehanna, LLC will help you enjoy a recreational kayak trip on the scenic Susquehanna River. We provide expert and friendly guides, paddling equipment, shuttle, water, snacks, and even digital pictures of your trip!

Earthday Campground - Family owned 123-acre campground located between the Anthracite Outdoor Adventure Area and 8,000 acres of Pennsylvania State Game Lands!

Williamsport South/Nittany Mountain KOA – Family-friendly campground tucked into the rolling hills of the beautiful Susquehanna River Valley and convenient to the interstate offering RV hookups, cabins and tent sites. Nearby attractions include Knoebels Amusement Resort, Country Cupboard and Clyde Peeling's Reptiland recreational activities. The venue offers 70 groomed campsites and two cabins available from April 1 to November 30.



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WARDIAN'S PICKS

THE RECORD-BREAKING RUNNER
SELECTS HIS GO-TO GEAR

by GRAHAM AVERILL

MICHAEL WARDIAN RUNS

WEIRD. It's not that his gait is awkward, it's the type of runs he likes to do. Wardian, 41, who lives in Arlington, Va., has owned the world record for fastest marathon while pushing a stroller, and the world record for fastest 50K on a treadmill. He set that record while on a cruise ship, after completing a Spartan race. And last year, he won a marathon at the North Pole, which he ran in negative 40-degree temps. "I like to do things that seem like they're fun and different," Wardian says. But he's not just about running quirky events. A seasoned ultra-runner, Wardian has won

more marathons and ultras than we can count. He finished an astonishing 54 races in 2014, and competed on the US National Team in the 50K and 100K distances. Oh, and he was chosen by USATF as the Master Ultra Runner of the year. Here are Wardian's favorite pieces of gear, in his own words.



NO 1. HOKA ONE ONE CHALLENGER

These are my go-to shoes for trails. There's a ridiculous amount of cushion and they're ridiculously light. A good, strong upper too. I was running with them even before I was sponsored by them. \$130; hokaoneone.com

NO 2. NATHAN SPEEDDRAW PLUS

This is an all around functional, kickass bottle. I use it for any kind of trail race that I have to carry water. Sometimes I'll run with two. One for water, one for electrolytes. \$18; nathansports.com

NO 3. RACE DOTS

With these, you don't have to put holes in your kits at races. I think it's dumb to put a hole in a \$100 racing shirt. \$20 per four-pack; racedots.com

NO 4. NATHAN ELEVATION

This pack is a little bigger than their others, but I used it during a 30-hour race at Mont Blanc and became appreciative of the extra space. You can put a lot of stuff in it, but it doesn't bounce around. It sits well on my shoulders and you can adjust it on the fly thanks to the toggles on the side. \$150; nathansports.com

NO 5. JULBO CORTINA

These are old school but awesome. They're good for running, or just kicking around. The price is reasonable, and the lenses are amazing. \$70; julbousa.com

NO 6. OSPREY ACE 50

Tired of carrying all of your kids' gear? Ready for them to shoulder some of the load? The Osprey Ace 50 is a perfect combination of lightweight comfort and technical features for children ages 7 to 14. The 50-liter backpack weighs just under three pounds and has easy-to-adjust, comfy shoulder straps and a fit-on-the-fly hip belt. For beginner backpackers, the Ace 50 is a great fit. \$160; ospreypacks.com

NO 7. NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC APPALACHIAN TRAIL TOPOGRAPHIC MAP GUIDES

The legendary A.T. now has an iconic series of trail map guides. For the first time, National Geographic has produced a definitive set of 13 Appalachian Trail topo map guides. Leave the clunky, heavy guidebook at home and carry this waterproof, tear-resistant map (with rust-resistant stainless steel staples) on your next A.T. excursion. They measure 4 1/4" x 9 x 1/4" inches and fit inside a pocket or backpack pouch. Our wear-tester crumpled the map into a ball and stuffed it into his pocket for a few weeks, then threw it in the washing machine, and it still came out ready to use. Each map contains detailed mile markings, locations of springs, shelters, trailheads, camping areas, scenic views, and even the nearest showers and laundry stops. The northernmost sections are already available; the central sections (Massachusetts to Pennsylvania) roll out this month, and maps of the southern A.T. from Maryland to Georgia will be available in August. \$14.95; natgeomaps.com



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WHAT'S THE POINT?



HOW PURPOSE IMPROVES PERFORMANCE

by BRAD STULBERG

So Pharr Davis set out on the Appalachian Trail for the first time. The experience taught her far more than rudimentary backpacking skills. "I met wonderful companions and felt indescribable awe," she says. "I learned to prioritize people and experiences over stuff."

But perhaps more than anything, Jennifer connected with nature in a visceral way. "I discovered nature was not separate from me, but that I could be a part of nature, flowing with it." Pharr Davis says she felt closest to God while on the trail. "I realized that maybe my gift is an ability to move swiftly in the wilderness. As a Christian, I felt obligated to use that gift."

And use that gift she did. Just a few years later in 2008, with more training under her belt and the support both on and off the trail of her new husband, Jennifer hiked the Appalachian Trail in 57 days. It marked the fastest-known time ever for a woman. By then, hiking had become an integral part of Jennifer's life. She started to think, "Maybe I could break the overall record."

The overall record stood at 47 and 1/2 days and had been held by a long line of competitive male athletes who specialized in ultra-endurance events. Although Jennifer's breaking the overall record would be akin to

On just the 12th day of her record-attempting Appalachian Trail hike, with over 1,650 miles remaining, Jennifer Pharr Davis was broken down, depleted, and ready to give up. Perhaps the most disabling combination for a hiker—shin-splints and diarrhea—had been wreaking havoc on her body for the last four days. Negative thoughts and fear were poisoning her mind. "It was the perfect storm," says Pharr Davis. "I was already way off pace and thought 'there is no way I can get the record.' I gave up." She approached a juncture on New Hampshire roads where she was meeting her husband Brew, who was supporting the hike. She was sad to quit, but relieved to be done.

The buildup to that juncture started seven years back when Jennifer was 21. Upon finishing college it struck her that her traditional education "happened in a box." She knew nothing about the environment, and sensed that something central to her human experience was missing. She longed to connect with nature.



JENNIFER PHARR DAVIS WITH HER HUSBAND BREW ATOP SPRINGER MOUNTAIN AFTER THE RECORD-SETTING A.T. JOURNEY.

a woman beating all the professional men at the Boston Marathon (i.e., unthinkable), she had unshakeable self-belief, and the backing of Brew. They devoted themselves to going for it, dedicating the next three years of their lives to training and preparation.

Fast forward to June 28, 2011, when Jennifer's drive and chances of breaking the overall record came to a crippling halt as she approached Brew on those New Hampshire roads. "I finally got to Brew and told him I was quitting," she says, but "Brew was not okay with it." Brew reminded Jen that he had given up so much of himself for her, and that this was a team effort. It was only then, looking into her husband's eyes, that Jennifer realized, "Until then, everything had been about me and the record. I was a slave to the record, it was all I was thinking about." At that point, Pharr

Davis had a revelation that changed everything:

"I just totally released from the record. I started hiking out of a greater faith. I wanted to honor my God, to get back to the reasons that got me hooked on hiking to begin with—a love for the wilderness, a love for my husband, and to use my gift. I remembered that I feel closest to God when I am hiking up and down the trail as a part of nature, when I am loving my husband, when I am relishing in my gift. All of a sudden, the hike was no longer about a record, it was no longer about me. The whole thing became an act of worship to something greater than myself."

Although her physical discomfort ebbed and flowed throughout the hike, after that paradigm shift, Jennifer's psychological distress evaporated. She quickly ascended

from a very dark place.

Thirty-four days later, after averaging over 47 miles per day, Jennifer had accomplished the impossible and shattered the overall record by 26-hours, a feat that earned her the title of National Geographic Adventurer of the Year. (Note: As of print, Jennifer's record still stands. Scott Jurek, one of the world's most heralded ultra-runners and a key character in Christopher McDougall's hit book *Born to Run* set out to break the record in late May of this year.)

PURPOSE AS A PERFORMANCE ENHANCER

I shared Jennifer's story with University of Michigan professor Dr. Victor Strecher who studies the role of purpose in our lives and who is known for his expressive, articulate nature. He responded with an unusually short email: "Wow."

Dr. Strecher's research shows that when people focus on their core values and a self-transcending purpose (a purpose greater than themselves), they become capable of more than they ever thought was possible. In a somewhat ironic twist, according to Strecher, "The less you think about yourself, the better you are likely to become."

Strecher says that when we concentrate on something beyond ourselves, our ego is minimized. This is important because a large part of our ego's role is to quite literally protect our "self," telling us to shut down or flee when faced with threats. When our ego is minimized, so too are the fears and anxieties that often hold us back from major breakthroughs. Liberated from our ego, a whole new realm of possibilities opens up. Jennifer Pharr Davis's experience on the Appalachian Trail is a profound example of this phenomenon.

What's more is that emerging science is starting to show us what might have been happening in Pharr Davis's brain during her memorable

mindset shift on the trail. For a recent study published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, "Self-Affirmation Alters the Brain's Response to Health Messages and Subsequent Behavior Change," researchers including Strecher used fMRI technology (allowing them to look at neural activity in the brain) to examine what happens when people are presented with threatening messages. Sure enough, individuals who were asked to reflect deeply on their core values prior to receiving a threatening message showed heightened neural activity in a part of the brain associated with "positive valuation." In other words, their underlying neurology became more receptive to an otherwise threatening situation.

It is also worth noting that the effects were not confined solely to the brain. The individuals who reflected on their core values actually went on to overcome threats and fear in real life at a much greater rate than a control group.

Purpose is extremely powerful when it comes to being your best.

What Jennifer Pharr Davis accomplished physically on the Appalachian Trail is extraordinary, and undoubtedly takes a gift that lies at least partially in genetics. But what she did psychologically is no less remarkable, and is accessible to us all. By shifting our orientation from focusing on ourselves to focusing on something greater than ourselves, we become more likely to reach new heights. Whether that greater purpose is religion, family, friends, charity, or something else entirely doesn't much matter. What does matter is releasing from our ego. Going beyond our own little world. Transcending our self. *

Brad Stulberg writes about the art and science of health and performance. Follow him on Twitter @Bstulberg

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Why I Still Watch

I HIT ROCK BOTTOM AS A SPORTS FAN IN JULY 2007.

I was sitting in my living room watching the Tour de France, rooting for a Kazakh rider named Alexander Vinokourov. I don't know what drew me to "Vino," or, for that matter, what makes any of us root for certain athletes. I guess I admired his tenacity.

Five days into the three-week race, Vinokourov—a favorite to win the overall title—had crashed in a ditch and watched the field ride away from him, all but ending his hopes of donning the maillot jaune in Paris. But Vino didn't give up. He fought back and dominated an individual time trial in Stage 13, then won again in the mountains two days later. I remember pumping my fist and shouting at the television when he crossed the line that day, bandaged and defiant.

Maybe I was tired of rooting for Americans in the Tour. The prime culprit, of course, was Lance Armstrong. But in 2006, my heart broke as I watched the people's favorite, Floyd Landis, bonk in a

crucial stage 16 and lose 10 minutes to the field. Then, the very next day, I went hoarse shouting for Landis as he roared back to stun everyone and win by 5:42. I still remember bolting out my front door after that stage and riding my mountain bike as fast as I could for three hours, so inspired by what Landis had done.

Four days later, Landis won the Tour de France ... only to have it all soiled by a positive synthetic-testosterone test that made him the first Tour champ in 102 years to be stripped of his title.

When Vino charged to his second stage win the following summer, I thought there was no way he was dirty. The sport he loved was in too fragile a place for him to cheat. I should have known better. We all should have.

Four days after his thrilling time-trial win, the news broke: Vino had tested positive for blood doping. He and his team, Astana, were thrown out of the race. This meant Danish rider Michael Rasmussen was the Tour's new leader. Rasmussen was promptly disqualified for lying about

his whereabouts during pre-Tour drug testing (he later admitted to doping from 1998 to 2010). Organizers scrambled. Cynics bellowed.

Cycling was disgraced, and I was exasperated.

Less than two weeks later, Barry Bonds broke Henry Aaron's all-time home run record, belting his 756th dinger on August 7. Bonds, of course, would prove to be one of the dirtiest players in baseball history, a first-ballot Hall of Famer whose greed turned him into a pariah and has thus far kept him out of the Hall.

I considered giving up fanhood altogether—no lie. I didn't feel like I could trust what I was seeing anymore.

Most distressing, yet upstaged by the hubbub over who was cheating and how, I felt like the real victims—we the fans—were irrelevant. Landis and Vinokourov didn't know who I was, and they never would. They didn't care that I had rooted for them, that I had winced when they fell short and celebrated when they came back. They didn't care that they betrayed me.

THE PEAKS AND VALLEYS OF BEING A CYCLING SPORTS FAN IN AN AGE OF FALLEN HEROES

by DEVON O'NEIL

We were powerless, our only option being to stop watching bike racing entirely, which seemed even more unfair than their cheating.

Of course, I was hardly the first to feel that way. In the 17 Tours de France that took place from 1998 to 2014, nine men won the overall title. Only four of them remain untainted by cheating.

This year's Tour begins in the Netherlands on July 4. After two straight years of mostly clean racing, I've noticed that my confidence as a fan is coming back. The best GC rider in the world, 2013 Tour champion Chris Froome, seems genuine when he says, forcefully, time and again, that he is clean. I will root for him this year, just as I did last year until he crashed out.

But like a jilted lover, I will maintain a degree of caution in my rooting to protect myself.

I like to think the climate is different now. When the entire peloton was dirty and seemingly every other major leaguer was on steroids, the internal culture was one of acceptance, if for no other reason

Like a jilted lover, I will maintain a degree of caution in my rooting to protect myself.



than to show solidarity. Now, thanks to ample public shaming, more effective testing measures (though some believe cyclists have caught up and may be duping us again), and stiffer penalties, cheaters are forced to wear a brighter scarlet letter if they get caught. I believe that has deterred a fair number, certainly more than the prospect of betraying additional fans.

But as we get reminded every so often (like when three-time Boston Marathon champion Rita Jeptoo tested positive for EPO last year), it will probably take another generation to truly cleanse our sports. The other day I read a story in USA Today about Alex Rodriguez's pursuit of Willie Mays on the home run list. A-Rod (A-Fraud or A-Roid also work) was within five dingers of Mays, who happens to be Bonds' godfather. Bonds told the paper he was rooting for Rodriguez—a serial steroid user—to pass Mays.

"Any time anybody in the

game does something that's a great accomplishment, the game of baseball should celebrate that. No matter what," Bonds said. He couldn't comprehend how anyone could root against A-Rod. "Why hate on something you're paying to see?" Bonds said. "I don't understand it. He's entertaining us."

I guess. But Bonds still misses the point, which is not surprising. These transgressions are not your favorite actress getting a boob job. This is purity stained. Trust pissed on. By people we will never get to ask why.

Maybe all our modern scrutiny has made it feel worse. Maybe it was just a rotten generation of athletes and duplicity was inevitable. Take Vinokourov, for instance. After serving a two-year ban for his 2007 test, Vino returned to the pro tour and, in 2010, allegedly offered a

Russian cyclist named Alexandr Kolobnev 100,000 Euros in the middle of a breakaway to let Vino win. According to a report in the Swiss magazine L'Illustré, which broke the story, Vinokourov denied the allegations. "I won because it was I who went the fastest," he said. Now Vinokourov manages his former team, Astana, wielding significant influence in the sport he helped take down.

And finally we come to American sprinter Justin Gatlin. Gatlin won the 2004 Olympic gold medal in the 100 meters, but in 2006 he tested positive for synthetic testosterone and was banned for four years (he also tested positive for amphetamines in 2001). His biggest sponsor, Nike, dropped him.

Gatlin served his ban and came back to run the fastest 200-meter time in the world last year. Many feel he is the sport's second-fastest man

behind Usain Bolt. The IAAF even nominated Gatlin for Athlete of the Year—which, incidentally, prompted German discus star Robert Harting to ask the IAAF to rescind his nomination for the same award.

Hoping to capitalize on Gatlin's return to the spotlight, Nike re-signed him last year, a move that prompted a wave of condemnation from other Nike athletes and runners—and reminded us where morality ranks in a sports world built around money and fame.

Sometimes I still ask myself, "Is it safe to be a sports fan again?" I'm still not sure. It takes a lot longer to mend a heart broken by betrayal than inferior performance. *

Devon O'Neil writes for ESPN, Skiing, and Outside. Before becoming a journalist, O'Neil worked as a counterterrorism analyst in D.C.

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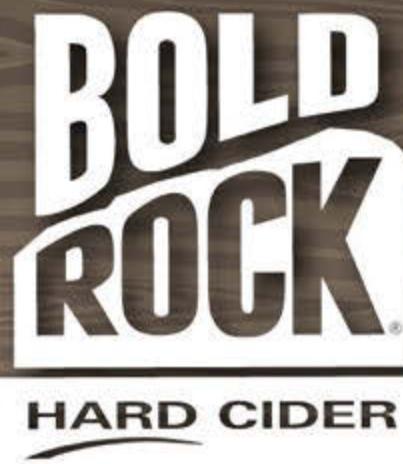
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WEST VIRGINIA'S CHRISTIAN LOPEZ
DELIVERS A TIGHT TWANGY DEBUT

by JEDD FERRIS

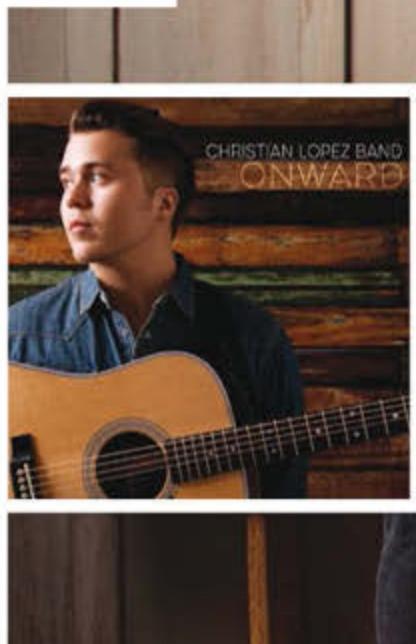
SOME OF THE SONGS ON Christian Lopez's recently released debut album, *Onward*, were written when he was only 14. Wise beyond his years, but still fresh-faced now at 20, the West Virginia-based tunesmith is quickly emerging as Americana's next great artist behind an authentic sound that's steeped in lyrical honesty.

To make his new album, Lopez traveled to Nashville and worked with one of the hottest roots-revival producers in town, Dave Cobb, who helmed Jason Isbell's *Southeastern* and Sturgill Simpson's *Metamodern Sounds in Country Music*. Lopez isn't as edgy as the two aforementioned songwriters, but he clearly has a dusty soul, channeling his Appalachian heart through a clear pop-minded voice.

"The music is still changing," Lopez says when asked about his sound. "I don't try to confine it, but right now if it's falling into that Americana world, I'm happy to be there."

Lopez grew up in Shepherdstown, inspired by the surroundings of West Virginia's eastern panhandle, specifically the Potomac River. Musical influence first came from his dad's record collection, which favored the classic rock of AC/DC and Pink Floyd, but as Lopez got older he started digging country icons Willie Nelson and Johnny Cash and then young revivalists like the Avett Brothers and Trampled by Turtles.

In high school he got an acoustic guitar and started writing songs, eventually developing the courage to sing them at open-mic nights at local spots like the Blue Moon Café. Lopez tried to tangle with the



industry machine, twice becoming a Hollywood finalist on *American Idol*, but he's since realized he's more suited more for the grassroots scene, gigging incessantly with his namesake band.

He's opened for Zac Brown Band and Dave Matthews Band, but as a headliner Lopez is still working his way through clubs and bars. He's particularly looking forward to the chance to make new fans during the band's three sets at FloydFest later this month.

"We're working towards a lot of goals, and that keeps us going," Lopez says. "We've got a lot of hope, and gas in the tank. That's all we need."

Lopez penned all the songs on *Onward*, except for a twangy version of the traditional "Oh Those Tombs," which was made popular by Hank Williams. His originals move between introspective country on the "The Man I Was Before," the weary front-porch ballad "Seven Years," and the breezy modern rock of "Will I See You Again" and "Pick Me Up."

"They're songs that I've had with

me my whole life," Lopez says. "They were written from the time I was 14 to the months before we went to record, so they're personal to me. In the studio we tried to capture the first reaction from everybody's first listen. That's something Dave (Cobb) likes to do. The first or second take is your body, your mind, and your heart's first reaction to the music. Whatever comes out is the way it should be."

This summer Lopez will be mostly living in his motorhome, touring with the band through August, playing shows as far west as California. Despite his new cred in Music City, he says whenever he gets a break, it's always taken back home in West Virginia.

"Everybody in Nashville asks me, 'When are you going to move down here?'" Lopez says. "I won't ever leave West Virginia. It's a great place to call home—good people, good food, good music—everything you could ask for."

THE RETURN OF AQUARIUM RESCUE UNIT

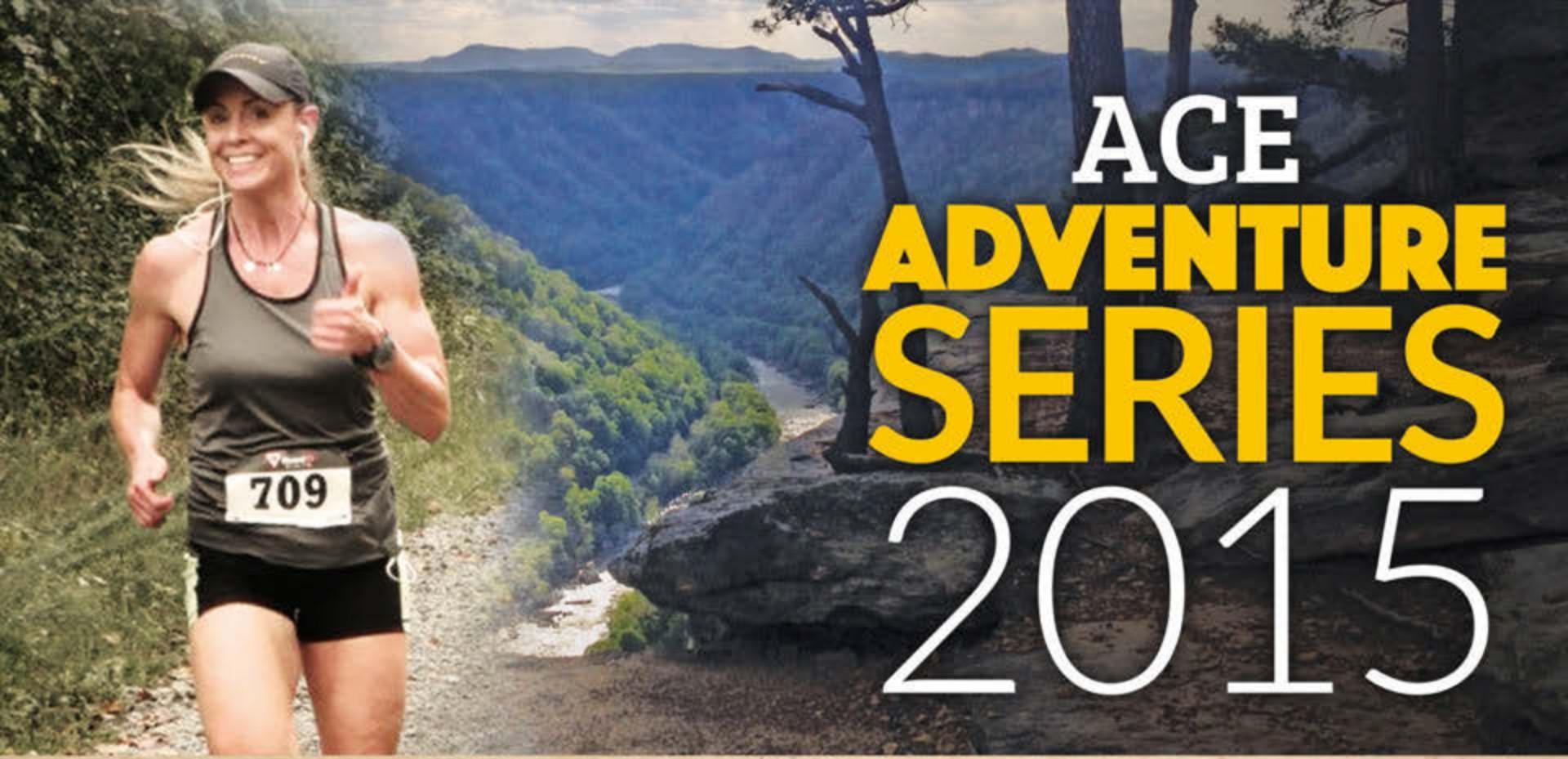
Col. Bruce Hampton & the Aquarium Rescue Unit is reuniting for a full tour.

The short-lived underground favorite came out of Atlanta at the tail end of the '80s with an exploratory rock sound that blended jazz chops with an outer-limits attitude. With Hampton as the ringleader, the outfit featured a list of all-star players who have gone on to bigger success, including bassist Oteil Burbridge (Allman Brothers), guitarist Jimmy Herring (The Dead, Widespread Panic), and drummer Jeff Sipe (Leftover Salmon, Keller Williams).

The band started with weekly gigs at Atlanta's Five Points Pub and went on to play large amphitheaters with Phish, Widespread Panic, and Blues Traveler on the H.O.R.D.E. tour at the dawn of the second-generation jam band explosion. While many feel ARU was the best of the bunch, the group disbanded in the mid-'90s before reaching its full potential. While reunion shows have popped up over the years, the band is finally getting back together for a full tour, starting in Colorado at the end of this month and heading to its native South for a bunch of dates in early August.

>> aquariumrescueunit.com

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